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J. L. Long

HISTORY
of the
Illinois River Valley

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Wm. E. Huley

cap. 5

FOREWORD

Few regions of like size in our country exhibit more unique features than does the Valley of the Illinois. In glacial times it was the outlet to the Gulf of Mexico for the run-off from the great ice sheets covering Canada, the Great Lakes, and north central states. In this era it received many of its present day physical features. Before Lake Erie found its egress to Lake Ontario over the Niagara Falls, the waters of the Great Lakes ran down through the Illinois Valley to the Gulf. Moreover, in that far off glacial period, the upper Mississippi and Rock rivers joined near the site of the city of Dixon and thence flowed southward to meet the Illinois near the present location of Hennepin. These forces have given the valley rather the character of a sluggish lake than a typical river bed, of normal fall. From Peru to the Mississippi, the Illinois shows only one and one-half inch of fall per mile.

Before the white man came, the valley's luxurious prairies abounded in all kinds of game and were a region much sought after by the Indian tribes. Here were fought some of the most momentous Indian wars. Today the lower valley abounds in Indian mounds of great interest. It is to be regretted that science has made but a tardy beginning toward a comprehensive study of this very rich archeological material in our midst.

While the rest of the state was yet an unexplored wilderness the French under La Salle, Joliet and Tonti, had drawn accurate maps of the Illinois River and planted forts there. Later Spain, France and England in their designs for a western and southwestern empire, counted on the easy communications of the Illinois River as a large element of their probable success. Even under American occupation and settlement, the valley exhibits many striking features. Extending nearly north and south, it was early filled in its lower course with southern folk, while its northern end filled later with a diverse stock recruited largely from New England and the northern Atlantic states. This has caused a wide divergence in social customs, politics, church affiliations and local government.

There is an element of surprise, also, in so matter-of-fact a sphere as that of transportation. For the first two generations of English occupation of the State, the Illinois River performed its prime function in carrying persons and goods southward toward Saint Louis. Then for the next half-century, with the building of the Michigan and Illinois Canal, the valley faced about and found its market for produce and manufactured goods in Chicago.

When our country builds an adequate inland waterway system, its aorta must be this old Valley of the Illinois.

To all who have contributed in any way to the data employed in the preparation of the story of the Valley of the Illinois, the author extends most grateful thanks; especially to the Henry M. Seymour Library, for the rich resources of the Finley Collection—and to newspapers and libraries and individuals too numerous to mention, appreciation is hereby expressed.

J. L. CONGER.

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CHAPTER I

THE NATURAL FEATURES OF THE ILLINOIS VALLEY

The Illinois River finds its origin in the junction of the Kankakee and Des Plaines rivers, some forty-five miles southwest of Chicago. Thence it runs in its upper course nearly westward for fifty miles to the great bend at Hennepin. From this point the middle course of the river continues almost in a straight line in a southwestward direction for more than 100 miles. Thence the lower course of the river continues in the same general direction for more than 100 miles before joining the Mississippi about forty miles above St. Louis. Its drainage basin comprises some 32,000 square miles, more than one-half the area of the entire state.

This valley has had a most pertinent influence upon the character of the transportation and politics in Illinois. The physical features of the river itself offer many surprises. Its upper course throughout the fifty miles above Peru is narrow and swift with an average fall of three feet to the mile. In this section the river is gradually cutting deeper into bed rock. It is here that the state has been compelled to install locks in order to render the river navigable.

In the middle course extending for 100 miles below Peru, the fall is only a little more than an inch per mile and the river valley presents wide fluctuations in width, varying from about a mile to more than seven miles. It presents the appearance of a series of connected lagoons. In this section the bed of the river lies 150 to 200 feet below the adjacent plain.

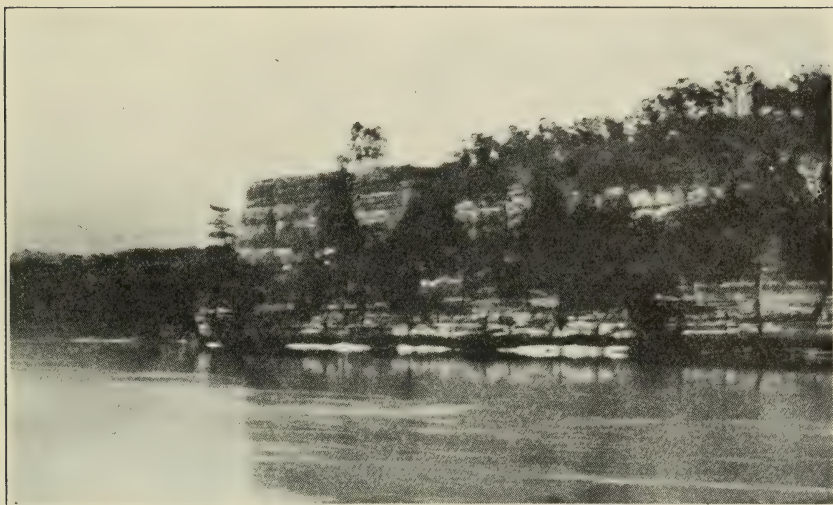
The lower section of the river throughout its 100 miles of extent presents more uniformity of width, which gradually increases as it approaches its confluence with the Mississippi. In this lowest third of its extent the fall of the river is surprisingly slight, being not more than an inch to the mile. The floods suffered by the occupants of the Illinois Valley are largely due to the fact that the river channel was formed long ago by a much larger stream, which instead of the St. Lawrence, was the outlet for the Great Lakes. The banks of this prehistoric river, setting back several miles from both sides of its present bed, are still extant. The present low water discharge is only 500 cubic feet per second at La Salle while the flood discharge at the same place reaches 85,000 cubic feet. This small volume of water and slight velocity prevent the stream from

forming adequate flood banks and from cutting a deeper channel; consequently the prevalence of frequent overflows. All these factors work together to give the Illinois River more the appearance of a lagoon or estuary. It is interesting to note that the early French explorers so pictured it on their maps.

To one who can read the exposed rock ledges of the Illinois Valley there is revealed a marvelous story. In the Peoria region the Pennsylvania bed rock can be found exposed. This was laid down ages ago when the valley was the seat of prolific vegetable growth like that of the Tropics. Geology teaches us that the Illinois Valley has not been submerged by the sea since this Pennsylvania stratum was formed. Today, this bed rock is normally covered to the depth of 200 or 300 feet with several different strata. This covering imposed on the bed rock portrays many interesting and various changes in the life of the valley. The many layers of coal tell of tropical climate producing a heavy vegetation, covered in turn with water, thus allowing the slow combustion necessary for producing coal. The layers of shale tell of a time when the region was covered by muddy water sluggish enough to deposit the finer mud from which shale is formed. The successive strata of limestone are mute evidence of a long period of submergence. The waters slowly deposited lime, dissolved and washed down surface soils of the higher regions which were not submerged. In time, these lime deposits became limestone.

At the end of these ages when the layers of coal, limestone and shale were formed, the region of our study probably presented a contour something like that of the present era. By the action of wind, frost and leeching rains, a soil was formed which produced a very heavy vegetation. The drainage systems worked a great unevenness of surface. Although the glaciers were to work mighty changes in the surface appearance of the valley, yet some features were to remain intact from this preglacial day. For instance, the low altitude of Illinois as compared to Wisconsin, Indiana, Iowa and Missouri was already accomplished. The prevailing tilt of the state from north to south was established. The middle and lower course of the Illinois River was already determined. In that locality the present bed of the stream follows the ancient preglacial bed; although throughout much of its length the water today as it follows this ancient channel is many feet above the original bed, the old channel having been filled with glacial drift.

No matter what the preglacial features of Illinois were, it is clear that nearly all were obliterated or radically changed by the great ice sheets that throughout long ages came down from the North. Each in time receded only to be followed by another. While all of Illinois' immediate neighbors were covered, the effect of the glaciers on Illinois was somewhat unique due to the fact that preglacial Illinois formed a great basin lying



EAGLE CLIFF, STARVED ROCK STATE PARK



BAILEY FALLS NEAR LA SALLE

from 100 to 500 feet lower than Indiana, Wisconsin, Iowa and Missouri. This accounts for the greater thickness of glacial drift which filled the earlier drainage systems and natural depressions to the depth of hundreds of feet as revealed in modern well borings. In many cases these glacial deposits caused radical diversions in the whole course of considerable streams. Even the mighty Mississippi was forced into new channels, some of which were abandoned after the ice age, when the great river retook its ancient bed. Geologists think that because of such glacial interruption the Rock River together with much of the water of the upper Mississippi had jointly used a channel from about Dixon to Hennepin where it entered the Illinois. Later glacial changes diverted the Rock River into a new channel which it has since maintained from Dixon undisturbed to the Mississippi, while waters from the upper Mississippi basin were diverted into their present bed.

In this bygone ice age Lake Michigan poured its enormous runoff into the Illinois Valley along a course approximately that of the present Illinois and Lake Michigan Canal. The volume of water was great and likely filled the flood plain of the Illinois with a volume nearly twenty times its present proportions.

Evidence of this fact is found in the terrace formation paralleling the river bed. The successive terraces, each of considerable width and of diminishing height, are all mute witnesses to tremendous volumes of water which once poured down the valley, the highest and widest being the earlier and marking the size of the stream at its maximum flow. Many of the earlier river villages and settlements were laid out on these terraces in order to be above the reach of flood water. These early towns nearly always show a principal street parallel with the river and side streets at right angles rather than a layout according to the compass.

The most extensive deposits of marketable gravel are found in these terraces. The gravel at the different depths and at varying distances from the river bed shows an interesting variation in the size of pebbles. These reveal the varying velocities of the waters at successive stages in the river's history. The coarser the stone, the greater must have been the velocity of the waters.

The Illinois River has a flood plain relatively wide in comparison with the river bed itself. Before the development of modern drainage most of this area was a waste. It abounded in lakes, some being but the abandoned channels of the river, others having been formed by natural dams, or fans, as Geology designates them, caused by natural deposits brought down by tributary streams. The river's largest lake is thus formed. The fan of Farm Creek acts as a dam, producing the wide expansion of the river known as Lake Peoria. The so-called Upper Lake is similarly formed above the Narrows formed by the fan of Ten Mile Creek.

With the final retreat of the successive ice sheets almost every feature of the preglacial surface of the Valley of the Illinois was changed. The earlier drainage system had been filled and a new one determined through which the surface waters found their way towards the sea.

The surprisingly low elevation of the preglacial surface of Illinois as compared to the adjacent states offered less resistance to the advance of the ice sheet, allowing it to advance farther south than in the states both east and west of Illinois. This excessive quantity of ice deposited a deeper stratum of glacial drift in Illinois than elsewhere. It has been estimated that if the drift could be removed, the surface of the northern half of the state would be lower than the present bed of Lake Michigan instead of 200 to 400 feet higher as it now stands.

Each of the ice sheets differed in the character of the surface deposit left behind. The second principal invasion of the glacier, known as the Wisconsin sheet, lacked nearly 100 miles of reaching as far south as the earlier Illinois sheet. But from the latitude of Peoria northward the Wisconsin drift has given the upper valley its rich brown loam producing the highest yield of corn in the United States. This is due to the porosity of the drift combined with its high content of nitrogen and phosphorus. The deposit of black soil in this region is the result of humus growing upon a flat surface which had a faulty drainage.

Thus countless ages before the white man saw Illinois, the whims of wanton Nature gave this rich top dressing to the rock formations lying deep below. It was this luxuriant soil producing profuse vegetation which attracted the wild life of bird and beast of many varieties, which in turn made of the Illinois Valley the pearl of great price for the many warring tribes of the red men long before Columbus saw Salvador.

CHAPTER II

HOW ILLINOIS LOOKED A CENTURY AGO

The sons and daughters of the Illinois Valley, today familiar with its roads, towns and highly developed farms, would find it almost impossible to visualize the region as it looked to the first settlers. From Grafton to Hennepin most of the area of the river counties was covered with timber. In this lower region, which was the first settled, only occasional prairie areas were found. These were usually designated as savannas or, as in Scott County, they opprobriously were called "Barrens." This bespeaks the unpopularity of those regions covered with the usual heavy timber. For a decade after the occupation of Scott County this neighborhood near Winchester was shunned. Today, though still known as the "Barrens," it is a very favored farming section. It was not appreciated until occupied and improved by a colony of English settlers coming directly from England with their cattle, eager for the pasturage offered by this peculiar region of scrub timber and luxuriant grasses.

Tradition has it that this region had once been a favorite hunting ground of the Illinois tribe of Indians until pushed south by the Kickapoos, their conquerors. The Kickapoos were later dispossessed by a treaty of purchase effected by the Federal government in 1812. Neither tribe seems to have made a permanent settlement in this locality, but used the region of nearly a township in area exclusively as a hunting ground. To enhance its utility for this purpose the aboriginal owners actually burned the accumulation of grass. A salt spring undoubtedly did much to attract the game so essential to Indian economy.

The Valley of the Illinois as a whole was marked by easy water communication. It is to be noted that the river and its principal tributaries made easy egress from south to north. It was to the southern areas of the state that the earliest settlers had come. Their children found it convenient and natural, as the older settlements filled, to push up the Illinois and in turn its tributaries to more virgin sections. Accustomed to timberland homes farther south they clung to the timbered banks of the streams, leaving for later emigration the prairie regions with their heavier soils, today by far the most valuable in the Valley.

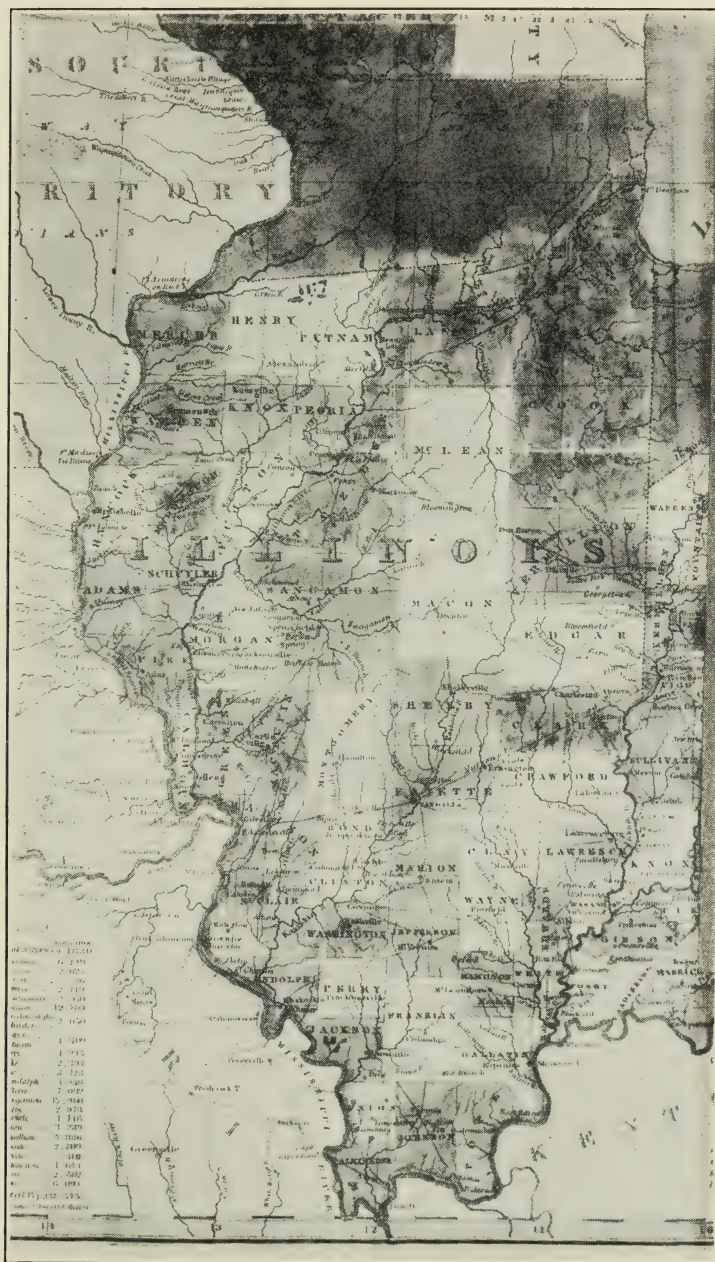
It is not easy for our generation to understand the value placed upon a timber farm by the pioneer. He found it easier to get a first crop

among the giant trees than to conquer the wild, blue stem sod. The early settler familiar with the routine of timber life, was an adept in removing the heavy foliage and killing the trees by a process known familiarly as "deaden." This operation was performed early enough in the summer to allow a crop of maize, sorghum, and other grains to be grown that same season. The heavy leaf mould was easily cultivated, was practically free from weed pests, and abounded in fertility.

The first settlers of southern Illinois and the lower section of our Valley offer a marked contrast to those who came in the migration which was later to settle the upper counties of the Illinois Basin. The southern settlement exhibits three progressive stages. First, the hunter class comes to "deaden" a small patch for his corn and other household vegetables. His chief dependence, however, was laid upon the long rifle. As the wild game rapidly thinned out, the hunter trekking farther and farther from the settlements, saw his cabin and clearing pass into the hands of the small farmer, who extending the area of clearing, tried to raise enough grain to feed his hogs and other livestock. In time small farmers sold out their holdings to incoming residents who were financially able and who preferred to buy partially cleared land. The dispossessed small farmer followed close upon the heels of the receding hunter.

All three of these classes were strikingly dependent upon the forest which was of the hardwood varieties. Here was to be found ash, birch, hickory and oak all of which lent themselves to the carpenter, implement maker and furniture builder. The nut-bearing trees attracted squirrels and turkeys for the frontiersman's pantry and furnished the mast upon which their hogs, ranging the forest, thrived. With such simple tools as saw, axe and broad axe, it was an easy task for the timber dweller to obtain a fairly comfortable habitation from the logs in his back yard. Compare the frontiersman of the grass lands who must house his family in the sod house of the frontier.

Within the homes, most of the kitchen utensils and the domestic tools, such as the spinning wheel and the loom, were fashioned by the head of the family from the hardwood trees about him. In the winter days, many things of use and comfort were fashioned from strips of bark, carefully prepared during the spring and summer. Many a valued remedy was compounded from bush or tree or root. It was again the forest that yielded the resourceful housewife the store of coloring material for her home-spun cloth. The frontiersman's table was supplied largely from the wild berries and fruits of the woods. The sugar bush supplied him with delicious sugar for daily use and for preserving the native fruits. The splendid oak trees lent themselves to the skill of the cooper from whose hands came the barrels for the miller and those in which were packed the salted meats, the principal produce exported down the great



(Courtesy of the Finley Collection, Knox College, Galesburg)

ILLINOIS AS IT WAS IN 1835
From Ezra Strong's map of 1835

river. It was not long before the whip-saw supplanted the broad axe and adze. The resulting planks were adapted to the building of the simple river flatboats which, after making the trip to New Orleans, were frequently knocked down and sold to Europe for lumber.

Almost by magic, population grew in the Valley. The cleared patch became an extensive field. Soon the half-wild cows with their tinkling bells finding their own forage in the forest, became too numerous for unfenced crops. The problem of fencing became serious. But the forest-land farmer with the expenditure of time and muscle only, could split the beautiful giants of the woods into fence rails, and with the stake and rider, or snake fence, make his crops secure against wild or tame herds. Early travelers marveled at the miles of fence, made from rails uniform in diameter, split from walnut trees, the present-day value of which would exceed the current market value of the same fields.

Any one who has known the horror of a coal shortage in the face of a blizzard is in a position to grasp the significance of the woodsman-pioneer's ever ready supply of excellent fuel. Handy to his door was the hickory, oak, pecan and ash of the natural forest.

These many direct contributions of the forest to the comfort and sustenance of the timberland dweller seems trite in the recounting, but there were other highly vital though less self-evident contributions. Any one who has known the prairie housewife's plight as she faced life without soap, can readily appreciate why families dreaded leaving their friendly forests whose ashes were frugally stored in a leaching vat and whose product, added to the plenteous animal fats produced such generous quantities of good soap.

And last but not least, the pioneer familiar with the problem of cropping the lighter soils of the woodlands suffered a severe readjustment when he was forced to attune his system of agriculture to an entirely different set of conditions prevailing in the upper and prairie end of the Illinois Valley.

CONTEST BETWEEN GRASS AND TREE

From the great bend at Hennepin east, the Valley was more than eighty per cent grass with trees to be found only in occasional groves and these for the most part fringing the river or the smaller water courses.

What a sight these vast undulations of luxuriant blue stem grass must have made upon the early colonists. These uncharted seas of prairie at times struck his heart with dismay. What could be more appalling than to be lost there, especially in a winter's storm? The average dweller of the valley today could hardly find or recognize the original species of blue stem so recently the universal covering of both the upper valley and the great interior regions of Illinois. Some of us perhaps know of

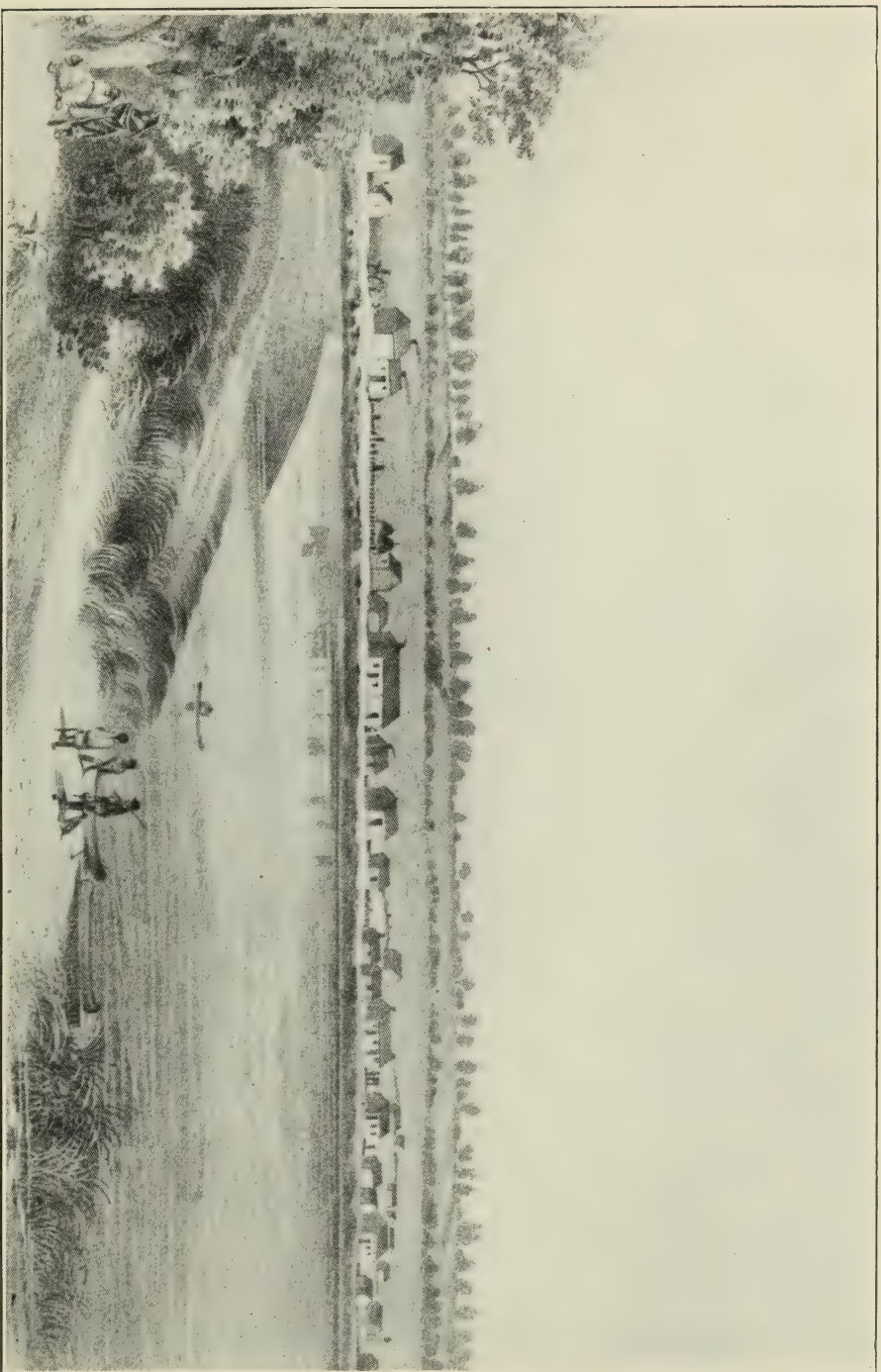
tiny bits of it still kept by some old-fashioned farmer as a coveted supply of hay for his horses.

The superficial observer is puzzled to explain why there should be these clearly differentiated sections of prairie and forest in so uniform an environment as Illinois affords. Many have ascribed the areas of grass to the periodicity of prairie fires set by the Indians to lure game animals to the fresh growth. Some have thought the heavy herds of grazing wild animals destroyed the seedlings. But a more satisfactory explanation seems to be that the presence of forest depends upon a characteristic rainfall and the nature of the soil. Forests demand that the naturally heavy precipitation of the spring be continued through the summer months if the seedlings are to live. On the other hand the native blue stem could thrive on the heavy rain of spring despite the excessive drought of late summer so characteristic of the prairie sections. Then again trees did not find the denser glacial clay soil so friendly as did the grass roots.

It is hard today, when the prairie regions of the valley have arrived at a much higher state of productivity and prosperity, for one to explain the reluctance of the early settlers to take up these areas rather than the timbered sections. Illinois was an old and established community before her settlements shifted from the predominating forest areas and spread into the great prairie sections of the central region, the upper Illinois Valley and the northern counties.

According to the census of 1820 the area of heaviest population, i. e., more than six persons to a square mile, did not reach north of the line of St. Louis, while the second degree of density from two to six to a square mile had touched only the lower two counties of the Illinois Valley, comprising parts of the present counties of Jersey and Calhoun. By 1830 the area of denser population had covered Calhoun and a portion of Pike on the lower west bank while on the east bank this denser population had ascended to Beardstown. At this period the area of second heaviest population had crept up the river beyond Peoria. But the upper 150 miles of this valley remained practically unsettled.

No comment today is more commonly heard among the descendants of the pioneers than surprise over the frontiersman's early aversion for a grassland home. Even in the prairie sections the pioneer tried to select his farm with enough of a grove to shelter the home lot. This was rendered feasible at first by the presence of a fringe of trees in the rougher ground along the water courses. The early eastern observers of Illinois were inclined to classify all grass lands as swamps. And before cultivation changed the nature of the terrain, there was considerable foundation for the criticism. Ague and malaria were the bane of the pioneer's life though careful observers clearly prophesied that cultivation



PEORIA IN 1831

From drawing by J. M. Roberts and showing from left to right: Old Courthouse, Charles Ballance's residence, Ruins of Fort Clark, John Hamlin's store and dwelling and Seth Fulton's Hotel. In the foreground is William Eads.

would soon remedy these defects. Travelers complained that the natural nuisance of marshy ground was unduly aggravated by the readiness of the early settlers to construct well ponds.

An isolated family must have found unbearable the monotony of the sweeps of the unbroken sea of grass, especially when the August drought and heat settled down upon the land. Even more perhaps to be dreaded was the unbroken sweep of winter storms and blizzards over the uncharted plains. Prairie fires were a constant threat to life and property.

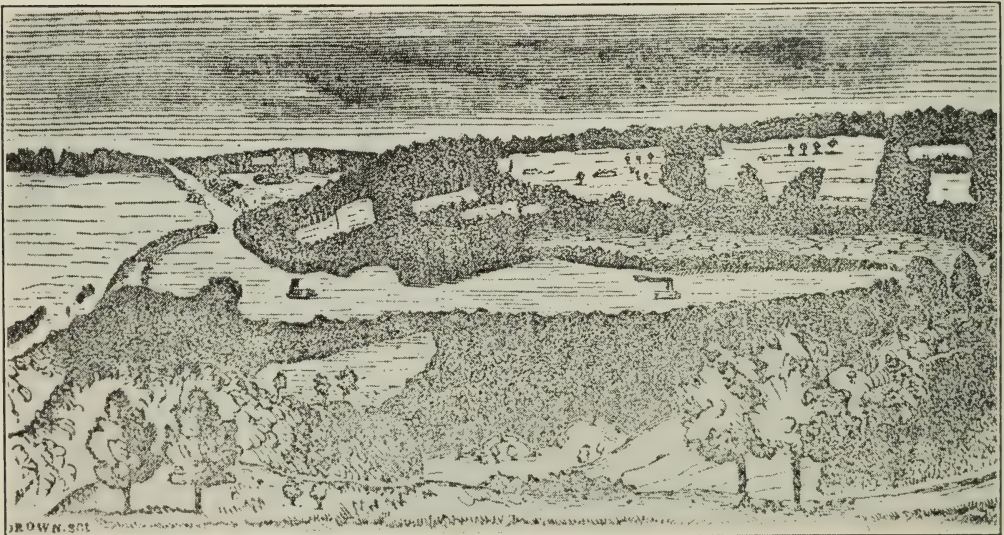
The first occupants of the prairie found their past farming experience a handicap rather than a guide in the new environment. Old-time crops did not thrive well in the new soil despite its fertility. Experienced agriculturists like Fowler and Birkbeck quickly sensed the need of a new and particular economy, in which cereals should be supplanted largely by a system of grazing with sheep and cattle. Efforts to improve live stock were embraced early. But here again certain difficulties incidental to the grass lands arose. In the seasons of scant rainfall the herdsman had great difficulty in securing a ready and unfailing water supply. In the forest sections nature had been generous with her flowing springs and pioneers now compelled to dig deep and wall their wells were sorely perplexed. The increase in flocks intensified another handicap of the prairies in the lack of fencing material. The early observers thought the solution lay in adopting a system of ditches deep enough to restrain their live stock. This must have seemed a Herculean task to a population familiar with effective and cheap rail fence of their former forest farms. Birkbeck had estimated the total cost of erecting the rail fence in timbered sections at less than one-third of a dollar a rod, a price much less than our modern life can show.

The pioneer in the prairie found his greatest embarrassment in the incapacity of his tools to meet the needs of the new soil with its tangle of root growths. Few stories are more interesting than that involved in the evolution of the modern plow. This tool had been used since antiquity but had made little progress through the centuries. It remained essentially a wooden implement, reinforced by strips of iron, until the beginning of the nineteenth century saw the first patent issued for a cast iron plow. Thomas Jefferson gave considerable time and effort toward drawing up the proper mathematical specifications for a plow design. But not until the beginning of the third decade of the nineteenth century, simultaneously with the first settlements in the prairie sections of our valley, was the modern type of plow patented by Jethro Wood of Scipio, New York, and not until steel was substituted for cast iron by Lorn in 1836 and Illinois' own John Deere in 1837 did the prairie farmer have a tool competent to handle easily the tough fibrous grass-land soil.

Even with the perfection of tools, his troubles were not at an end. There remained the problem of finding sufficient animal power to operate the tool. In contrast to the one-or-two-animal ploughing of the light wood soils, teams of at least six head were required in the prairie region. This put a serious demand on the pioneer for capital or coöperation with his neighbors.

Birkbeck from the first had sensed this need of coöperative effort if the prairie were to be made hospitable for the frontier family. He decided that "concentration of capital and numbers is the only refuge from many privations and even sufferings in these remote regions." The communistic settlement of near-by Indiana, especially New Harmony, commanded his respect and he ascribed their immediate prosperity to the coöperative element in their organization. But he feared that this strength would be wasted through their fanatical religious beliefs.

No greater miracle has been wrought in this land of stupendous surprises than the metamorphosis by which this repellent prairie region has become the most productive and most esteemed of the entire state and Middle West.



(Courtesy of the Finley Collection, Knox College, Galesburg)

LAKE PEORIA FROM PROSPECT HILL
From Drown's Record, 1850

CHAPTER III

THE PREHISTORIC INHABITANTS OF THE VALLEY

The Illinois River Valley has, broadly speaking, had but two phases of human occupation—that of the red man and that of the white.

Much of the deep dark mystery about this region's aboriginal dwellers has been clarified in the light of scientific investigation, even though nothing more than an approximate solution has been, or probably ever will be, reached.

In frontier days there prevailed a popular conception "of a most antique race of men, unlike and superior to the red man. * * * of a time and age greatly superior to the present—when the men were giants and the behemoth strode over these prairies, monarch of the plains." A contemporary historian of 1838 was impelled to ask, "What are the men of this pigmy age to the colossal warriors of those undegenerate times—our Lilliputian boasts to the monstrous and outre extraversions of those fecund eras?"

Such fabulous notions now have almost entirely been relegated to mythology. That they should have found approbation in the pioneer mind is not, however, to be wondered at. The advent of the white man became an artificial line of distinction between the present and a vast, fathomless past. From the time Columbus made his chance discovery and the migratory movement from Europe started, there has been a fairly complete accounting of the natives we call Indians. What went on during the long reaches of time before then was not so easily determined. There were no written records to tell the story. The Indians themselves could offer only vague and untrustworthy traditions of their origin. The only reliable source of enlightenment rested in scattered bones, ruins and relics.

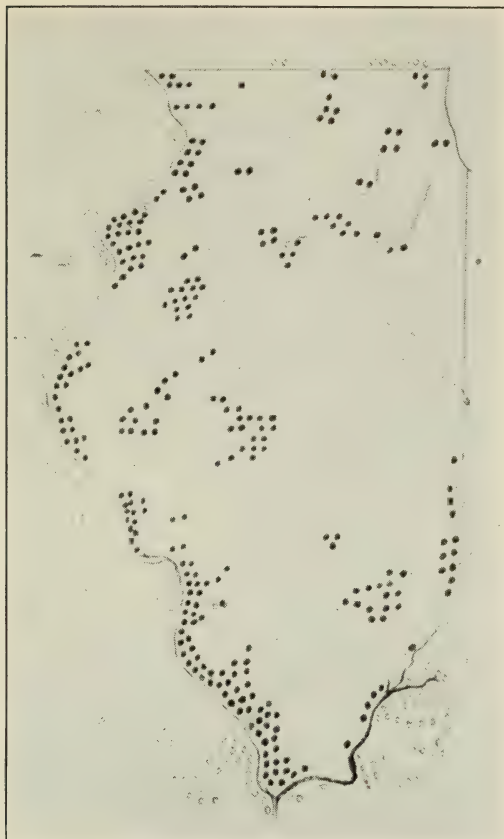
A scientific reading of this fragmentary evidence has proved quite conclusively, however, that the Indians whom the white man found living their simple lives and fighting their savage battles were little different from their prehistoric forerunners who left numberless earthen mounds up and down the valley as monuments to their half-barbaric, half-civilized past. It is now generally conceded that, whether they were on hand to greet the first Caucasian explorer or lived a half dozen centuries before, all can be traced to the same common origin; that together they comprise the true American race.

Refutation of the theory that a distinctive, superior race preceded the Indian is not the only problem the American anthropologist has had to solve. He has had even greater obstacles to overcome in determining just how man first came to inhabit this continent and how long ago. For years divergent opinions were pitted against each other. One school of thought held that human life was indigenous to North America, another traced it to a mysterious lost continent, and still others accredited it to any one of a number of ancient peoples, among them the Egyptians, Phoenicians, Greeks, Polynesians, Irish and Australasians. Out of this conflict of ideas there gradually emerged a semblance of agreement. The general consensus today is expressed by a recent hypothesis by Shetrone "that the native American race belongs to the great Mongloid division of the human family; that its progenitors came to America from Asia, in all probability by way of Bering Strait; and that the time of their arrival was subsequent to the most recent of several glacial invasions, which, according to geologists, was some 8,000 or 12,000 years ago." This migration from the old world to the new, not unlike that of the white man from Europe which followed some centuries later, was not, Shetrone further ventures, "an enterprise begun and completed in a comparatively short time. Continuous bands of migrants under venturesome leaders presumably continued to cross the strait throughout centuries of time, as the great continents to the southward received and absorbed their first inhabitants."

The main part of this movement, it is believed, followed the Pacific Coast southward into Mexico and Central and South America where climatic conditions were conducive to such advanced stages of cultural development as were achieved by the Aztecs and Incas. Then, in course of time, as the migratory spirit again asserted itself, the trend appears to have started back northward, first into the Pueblo country of our Southwest and thence into the great central portion of the continent. This latter area is characterized by the widespread prevalence of mounds built by native dwellers for the burial of their dead or as bases for their houses and temples. Mound-building seems to be an elemental human trait, world-wide in practice among primitive peoples, the germ of which, as Shetrone puts it, "was destined to find expression in Mexico in characteristic pyramids and temples; in the mound area in form of earthen mounds."

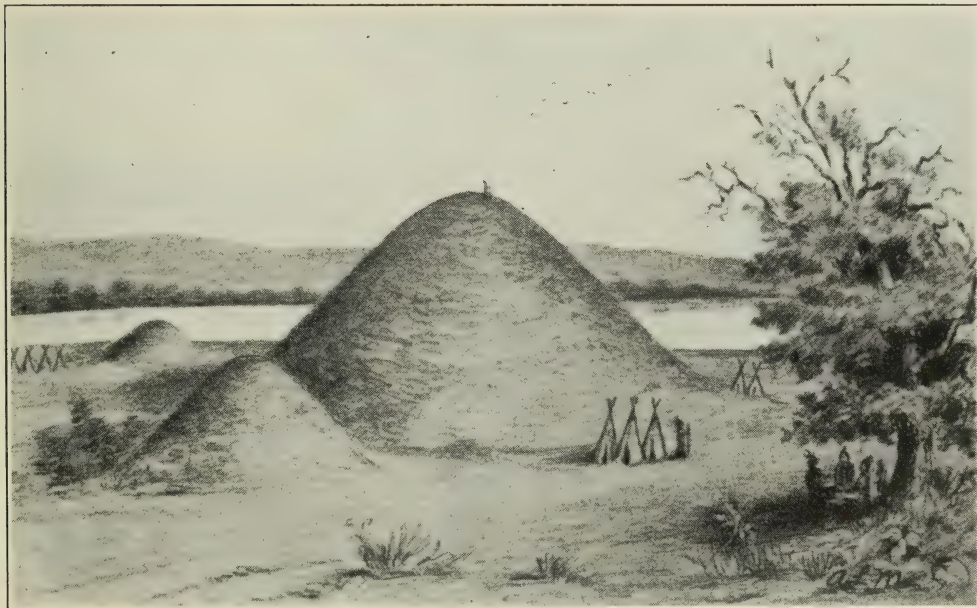
MOUND-BUILDING INDIANS

These earthworks abound so extensively in the Illinois Valley that its prehistoric inhabitants are commonly designated as Mound-Builders. The presence of mounds does not, however, preclude the possibility that other tribes entirely without the mound-building tendency lived in the



(Courtesy of the Illinois Historical Society)

INDIAN MOUNDS OF ILLINOIS
From the twelfth Annual Report of the U. S.
Bureau of Ethnology



(Courtesy of Illinois Historical Society)

THE BEARDSTOWN MOUNDS IN 1817

same or adjacent regions; but they left no such indisputable evidence as mounds. Moreover, it has been determined that all mounds were not the work of prehistoric peoples. Articles of European origin found in some are conclusive proof that they were erected by Indians who had contact with white men. Thus it will be seen that the so-called Mound-Builders were Indians in the same degree that the Indians were Mound-Builders. Both names were coined arbitrarily by the white man. The Indians are so styled because Columbus mistook his point of disembarkation for the East Indies and, at sight of the bronze-skinned inhabitants, exclaimed, "Los Indios!" In a strict sense they were not, of course, Indians at all; and only by common usage has the error of this misnomer been condoned. Similarly, a branch of this great native race whose activities extend back to times before history was written were given the designation of Mound-Builders simply because, among other things, they built mounds. In reality they were mound-building Indians, just as the Pueblos were cliff-dwelling Indians.

Mounds of the valley region which show European influence are exceptions rather than the rule. Therefore, most of the mounds are presumed to be the work of peoples of pre-Columbian times, some of them dating back centuries. Yet a study of their contents shows that the builders were on the same common plane as their Indian ancestors of a later era. They appear to have been semi-barbaric children of the wilderness, occupying the hunter-fisher stage of human development. They partook of nature's bounties, depending upon wild game, fish, cereals, fruits, nuts and berries for their sustenance. What clothing they wore were rude, untailed garments of skins and furs whose function was to protect from wind and weather. Their shelters were flimsy structures of bark or skins over frames of wood. They possessed the simple arts of kindling fire; of chipping flint and shaping stone and bone into implements and ornaments; and of moulding clay and baking it into pottery. They were unfamiliar with metals. Their weapons were clubs, stone hatchets, and flint-headed arrows, spears and harpoons. The dog was their only domestic animal. They did not know the use of beasts of burden. Socially they may be conceived of as possessing the rudiments of government, centering in the family group, and a basic religious concept in which the supernatural and magic were the outstanding elements. Their recreations must have been of the simplest nature. They appear to have only the most elementary notions of barter and trade. Of their language, all that is known is what might be reflected in the many tongues and dialects of the historic tribesmen. They left behind no system of writing to perpetuate the record of their existence.

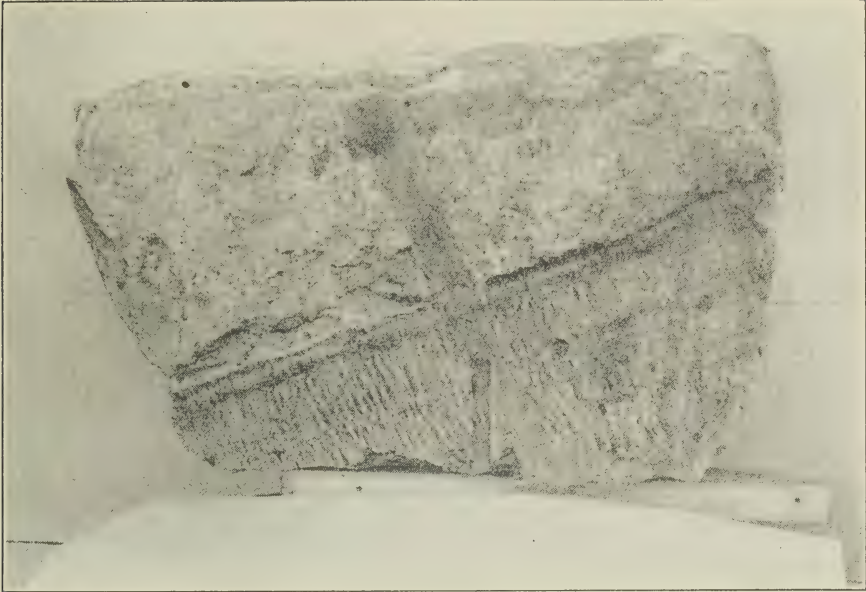
Further study of the mounds, however, reveals that these prehistoric Indians had variances in habits and customs, peculiar to tribes or divisions, just as those of more modern times. Some mounds, for instance, contain

multiple burials, others only the remains of a single person or family group, indicating different mortuary methods. Some likewise yield pottery of a better quality than others. The presence of ashes might mean that this tribe either engaged in sacrificial customs or practiced cremation for disposal of the dead. Sea shells might indicate that another tribe migrated from a former habitat beside an ocean, or carried on barter with distant tribes. Still further evidence of differences in tastes and manners is found in the size, shape, geometric arrangements and type of construction of mounds. Some are in the crude shapes of birds, beasts, and serpents and hence are known as effigy mounds. Distinctive characteristics which first came to notice in mounds on the farm of Captain Hopewell in Ohio give evidence of a rather advanced culture among aboriginal inhabitants. This has been designated as the Hopewell culture and manifestations of it have been disclosed in many different localities.

MOUNDS OF THE VALLEY

This state, particularly the valley region, is rich, not only in its number of mounds, but in the variety they represent. "No less than four, and possibly five, mound-building cultures have left their imprint on the soil of Illinois," says Shetrone in his book, "The Mound-Builders." "The effigy-mound culture centering in southern Wisconsin extends southward into Illinois at least as far as Rock Island and Stark counties. Within the same belt but extending downward along the Illinois and Mississippi rivers, contiguous to a similar development in eastern Iowa, is the Hopewell culture, in evidence as far south as the mouth of the Illinois River. Bordering the Illinois River from the vicinity of Joliet to its mouth is what may be termed the Illinois culture, known locally as the 'bluff' culture. The mound development along the Mississippi River in the west-central part of the state appears somewhat analogous to the Illinois culture but may prove to be distinctive and allied to that of northeastern Missouri. The district fronting on Lake Michigan presents some distinctive characteristics, and the extreme eastern section and contiguous portions of western Indiana, bordering the Wabash River, do not appear to conform entirely to any of the other identified cultures of the state."

Not a county in the valley is without its share of mounds which at some time or other have been the center of excited local interest and speculation. Much, however, remains to be done in archeological research in this region. A mound survey of the state was made in 1890-91 for the United States Bureau of Ethnology under the direction of Cyrus Thomas, but this work, while important, was of necessity quite general in scope. Dr. J. F. Snyder made some valuable personal investigations in coöperation with the Smithsonian Institution, and in more recent



A SECTION OF THE INTERIOR WALL OF THE DICKSON PYRAMID
MOUND, LEWISTOWN

The impression of the rush mat form shows clearly in the photograph



A FLASHLIGHT OF THE SINGLE SKELETON AND THE ALTAR WITH
ANCIENT FIRES FOUND BY THE DICKSON BROTHERS IN THE
PYRAMID MOUND AT LEWISTOWN

A twenty-two pound piece of silver ore lies on the board

years the excavations by George Langford in Will County and members of the Dickson family in Fulton County have been important contributions. Operations of a definite character are also now being carried on by the anthropology departments of the Universities of Chicago and Illinois, and out of these joint efforts a reconstruction of prehistoric life is gradually taking form.

The focal point of mound interest in the valley at present lies in Fulton County, especially that triangular portion formed by the convergence of the Illinois and Spoon rivers, southeast of Lewistown. Here Dr. Don F. Dickson attracted widespread attention in 1927 when he excavated a great mound on his father's farm that disclosed a graphic picture of prehistoric man. This mound was originally crescent-shaped, 550 feet long and some thirty-five feet high, but when the house that now stands upon it was built a generation ago, much of the top was graded off and the earth thus displaced was used to fill in the basin within the curve of the crescent. While this was being done, wagon loads of skeletons were hauled away together with countless articles of flint, stone, bone and pottery. When Dr. Dickson undertook to excavate what remained of the mound, he took great pains to leave the burials and accompanying artifacts in their original positions. Then he erected a building over the excavation to serve as a museum which since has attracted visitors from far and wide. Some 230 human skeletons have been uncovered, representing only a fraction of those originally buried in the mound. Their positions at different levels indicate that the burials were an accumulation over a period of years. Most of the bodies were accompanied by pottery vessels containing mussel-shell spoons and varying in size presumably to correspond with the age of the individuals. There also were many flint arrowheads, stone axe blades, and bone needles, fish hooks and beads to attest to the domestic life of the builders.

The Dickson Mound is ascribed in a general way to the Illinois or "bluff" culture, as contrasted with the older and more advanced Hopewell culture. A typical example of the latter is found nearby on the Ogden farm. This is a group consisting of a large mound and nearly a dozen smaller ones clustered around it, all of them surrounded by a shallow moat or ditch. Marion and E. Dickson, cousins of Dr. Dickson, in tunneling the large mound to use it for exhibition purposes, found a number of burials and artifacts showing these people to have been of a different tribe from those on the bluff. Particularly interesting was the remains of a wall structure of timbers and woven matting.

Only a few miles away, characteristics are found in the Tampico mounds near Liverpool differing from those of both the Dickson and Ogden sites. This is a group of a half-dozen low, dome-shaped mounds which have been explored by the University of Chicago. The skeletons

unearthed show these people to have been of the long-head type while arrow heads imbedded in some of the bones are signs of their participation in warfare. Their pottery was grit-tempered and had four-cornered rims, and among the other relics found were beads made of shells that were traced to the Gulf of Mexico.

Shetrone sums up the situation in Fulton County with the statement: "In this district there occur, interspersed with mounds and burials of entirely different cultures, interments unmistakably Hopewell, but showing plainly the influence of contact with associated cultures."

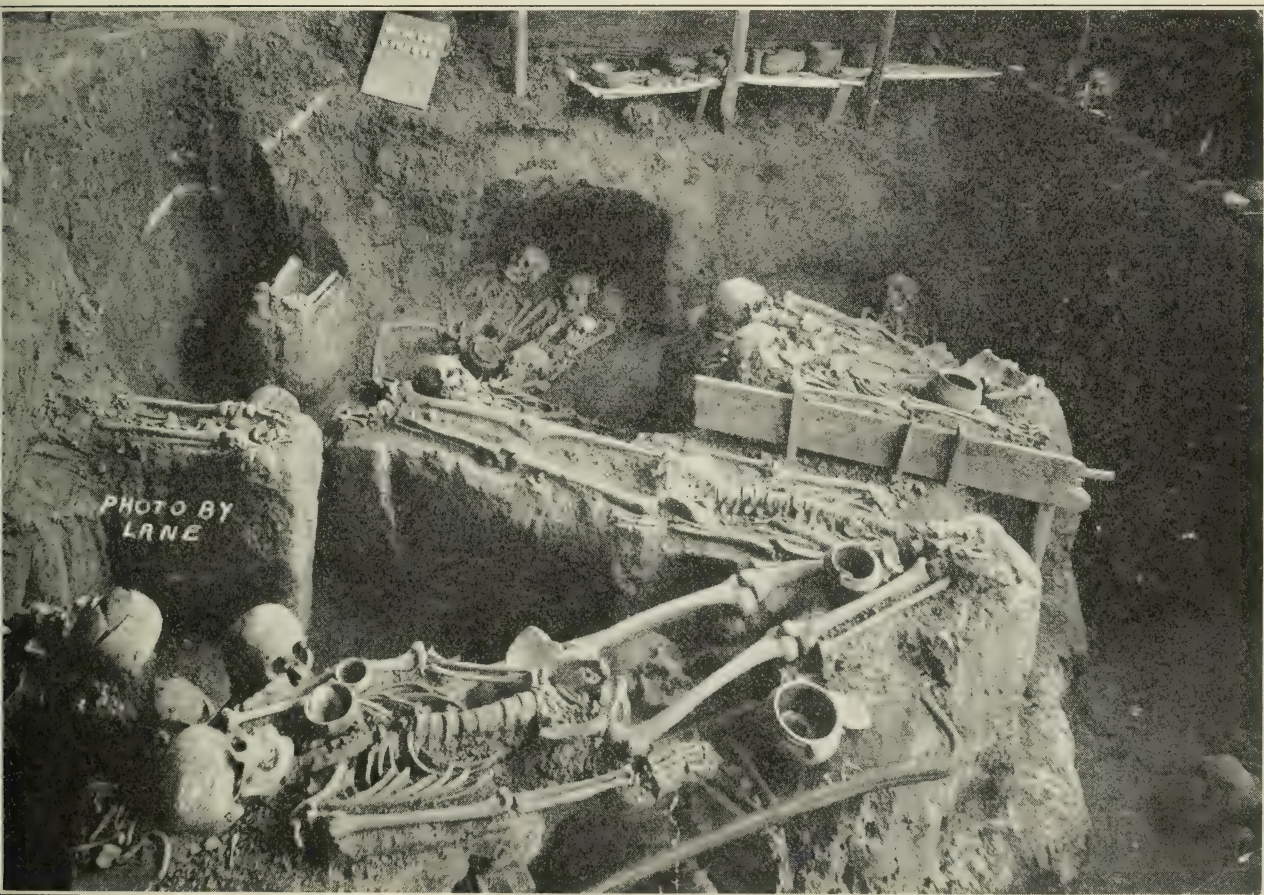
A still more striking example of different tribes having occupied the same locality is found in the Fisher mounds of Will County. This group, occupying the terrace overlooking the Des Plaines River, consists of two major mounds, seven smaller ones, and more than fifty "pits" or saucer-like depressions. Exploration has disclosed proof not only of successive occupancy by three distinct prehistoric cultures, but also that mound-building was practiced since the coming of the white man.

The two large mounds, explored in 1925-26, yielded 295 burials, superimposed from five feet below the original level to five feet above it. Not only the character of the skeletal remains and the artifacts accompanying them, but the presence of lines of division and diverse character of earth indicated the different occupations. Buried in the limestone gravel below the original surface, perhaps prior to the beginning of construction of the mound, were skeletons, the skulls of which were the long-thin and medium-head types, interred in a crouching posture and without relics of any kind. The absence of pottery from these sub-surface burials indicates that they may be comparatively ancient. Burials of the middle level of the mounds were those of short-headed individuals, accompanied by many pottery vessels and artifacts of stone, bone, and shell, indicative of the Illinois or "bluff" culture. The upper level contained burials of individuals of mixed head forms. The artifacts accompanying them being distinctive from those of the lower levels. With but one exception the smaller mounds were analogous to the larger ones. In this one, were found skeletons of a short-headed people accompanied by trinkets of iron, brass or silver of European manufacture. "The clay pots of the aborigine were replaced by the iron and brass vessels of the white man," Shetrone observes, "and the tumulus from top to bottom was unmistakably recent or post-Columbian in origin, the product of Indians who had come into contact with white traders."

These piles of earth and their decaying contents tell only in shadowy outline the story of prehistoric life in the valley. Much remains to be disclosed to connect the tribes of the dim, forgotten past with those whom the white man came to replace. The countless mounds all up and down the valley, yet unexplored, may some day supply the missing details.



THE PYRAMID MOUND, LEWISTOWN, AS IT APPEARS TODAY
House stands on truncated pyramid. The entrance of the tunnel ap-
pears in the right foreground



INTERIOR OF THE DICKSON MOUND IN FULTON COUNTY, SHOWING PREHISTORIC INDIAN
BURIALS IN THEIR ORIGINAL POSITIONS. EACH BODY IS ACCOMPANIED BY A POTTERY VES-
SEL, ITS SIZE DENOTING THE AGE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

CHAPTER IV

THE RED MAN IN THE HISTORY OF THE VALLEY

The story of the Indian in the Illinois Valley is one of abject tragedy. The sentiment often expressed that all was sweet and serene with the red man before the white race injected its disintegrating influence hardly applies here. The contention that the Indian's greatest need was protection from himself seems more fitting. The valley was a rich hunting ground which through untold years was the prize at stake in conflict between the tribes that held it and their covetous, encroaching enemies who desired it. This was warfare of the cruelest, most primitive sort, incited by jealous hatred and prolonged by lust for vengeance; waged with arrow, tomahawk and scalp knife, the atrocities of battle no more dreadful than the tortures imposed upon hostages. Such was the status of Indian life when the white man entered the valley. The French came first—venturesome, strong-hearted men, seeking to explore and barter with the Indians; zealous missionaries, no less courageous, striving to show the heathen savage the way to salvation. Then followed the contest of British against French for control of the new empire. The native tribes became veritable pawns to these European contenders, yet to them their alliances only fitted into older and more lasting enmities of their own. But when, in the course of events, the American colonies overthrew their mother country and white migration started to flow westward in earnest, the situation became definitely that of one race crowding out another, too weak to resist. In consequence, the ultimate dispersal of the Indian before the advance of a more aggressive people has taken its pathetic place in history beside the chronicles of fallen empires.

THE ILLINOIS INDIANS AND THEIR DOMAIN

When the French put in their appearance during the latter part of the seventeenth century the valley was dominated by a large and powerful federation of Indians from whom the state and river derive their name—the Illinois. Long before Illinois became an entity as a state of the Union, even before George Rogers Clark's conquest was organized into the County of Illinois as a unit of the far-away state of Virginia, this territory, because of its Indian inhabitants, was designated by the early French as the country of the Illinois or simply Illinois Country; and from

the start its principal stream was referred to as the Illinois River. So, too, did the first French maps show the present Lake Michigan as the Lake of the Illinois.

Illinois is the French contraction of an Algonquian word which, according to Father Hennepin, signifies "a man of full age in the vigor of his strength" or "a perfect and accomplished man." Father Marquette wrote that "to say Illinois is, in their language to say 'the men' as if other Indians, compared to them, were mere beasts." They no doubt had the savage Iroquois in mind in making such a distinction.

In the Jesuit Relations and other early writing of French explorers, the word was spelled in a variety of forms, ranging all the way from "Lin-i-wek" to "All-i-nou-es." The term undoubtedly was quite general in its application at first. It is easy to conceive how the first Frenchmen, approaching the shores of the Illinois and Mississippi, were greeted by haughty natives who pounded their chests and with characteristic boasting uttered the word which told the newcomers, "See what fine men we are." Then, by concurrence of writers, it seems to have become the common designation for all tribesmen of the Illinois confederacy. In time the French termination *ois* came into usage and the present form of spelling was evolved.

On a basis of the language they spoke, the Illinois belonged to the great Algonquian family, one of the three most important general divisions of aborigines in post-Columbian America. Tribes of this linguistic stock at one time occupied a more extended area than any other on the continent, their territory reaching from the Rocky Mountains to Newfoundland, and from Hudson Bay to South Carolina.

Tradition has it that the Illinois, Miamis and Delawares, all closely akin, came from the far West in a general migration at some remote prehistoric time. The Illinois stopped in the vicinity of Lake Michigan and to the south and west of it; the Miamis settled in territory now comprising the state of Indiana; and the Delawares, the largest of the three groups, passed on eastward beyond the Alleghanies and took up their habitation in the basin of the Delaware River.

The Illinois, as the French found them, were subdivided into perhaps a dozen different tribes, the largest of which, and those most frequently noted in history, were the Kaskaskia, Peoria, Cahokia, Tamaroa and Michigamie. When they first gained possession of their lands, it is likely that all were in a single tribe. But as they increased in number and scattered, they appear to have created the several tribal divisions as a matter of convenience. They continued to act together against common enemies, but their bond of union was one of blood relationship rather than a formal political alliance such as made the Iroquois League so formidable a war machine.

In the height of their power, the Illinois tribes probably occupied the entire area of the present state which bears their name, and extended well into Wisconsin on the north and Iowa and Missouri on the west. As early as 1657, French settlements in Canada received reports that credited them with sixty villages, 20,000 warriors and an aggregate population of 100,000. While these figures are considered inaccurate and probably an exaggeration, they indicate the prestige of the Illinois nation in early times. With the actual coming of the French, though still a proud and powerful people, their numbers had already been decreased and their territory materially decimated by wasting wars. At that time their range of occupancy extended, roughly, from the watershed between the Wabash and Illinois rivers westward to and at some points beyond the Mississippi, and northward to the debatable grounds between themselves and the Sacs and Foxes, the Winnebagoes, and the Kickapoos.

The Kaskaskias were the dominant Illinois tribe and occupied the upper part of the valley. Their principal village—truly the capital of the Illinois confederacy—stood just east of the great bend in the river near the present site of Utica in La Salle County and was overlooked by that great eminence of stone upon which the French built Fort St. Louis and which was to become known a century afterwards as Starved Rock. In later years, after the French withdrew their fortifications in the valley, the Kaskaskias, reduced and disheartened by constant warfare, moved southward and established their habitation at the mouth of the Kaskaskia River and near the site of the historic town which perpetuates their tribal name.

When Father Marquette descended the Mississippi River with Joliet in 1673, he was greeted by the Peorias on the west shore of that stream at the mouth of a tributary that was presumably the Des Moines River in Iowa. Two months later, however, when he ascended the Illinois, he found the same tribe established at the lower end of the expansion in the river now known as Peoria Lake near the site of the present city of Peoria. A hunting trip no doubt is the reason for their presence on the west shore of the Mississippi.

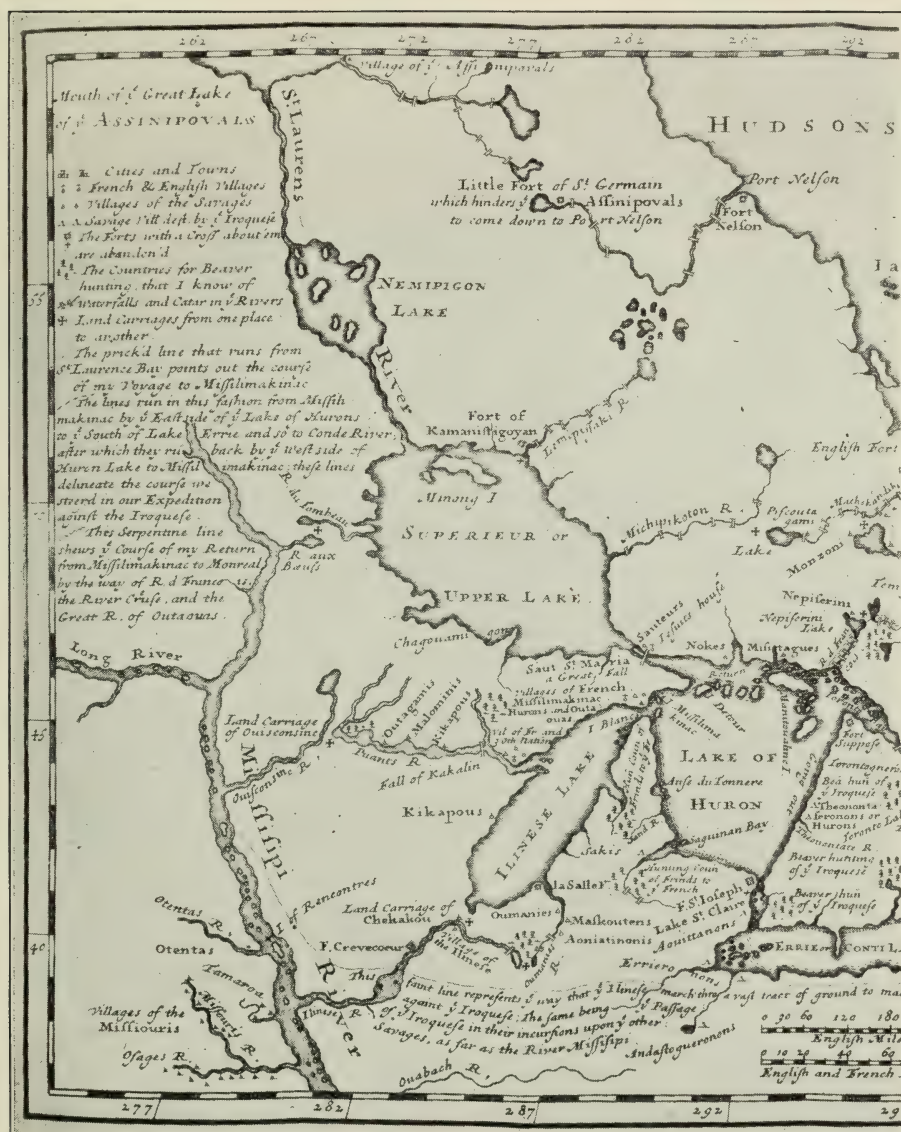
The Cahokias and Tamaroas, never very numerous in historic times, had their seat of habitation in what is known as the American Bottom south of the mouth of the Illinois. In later years these two tribes merged and lived as one.

The Michigamies were the most remote of all the Illinois tribes. Marquette and Joliet found them in 1673 dwelling in the region of Big Lake—territory that is now southeastern Missouri and northern Arkansas. It is held likely that they had pushed over into this locality from a previous habitat east of the Mississippi. By their separate existence they had developed enough variations in language and custom to make it

difficult at first to recognize them as akin to the Illinois. However, toward the end of the seventeenth century when they were driven by neighboring tribes from the valley of the Arkansas and across the Mississippi, they fell in so easily with the other Illinois tribes as to leave little doubt of their kinship. The connection between the Michigamies and the naming of Lake Michigan and the state of Michigan is not as undisputed as might at first appear to be the case. The Handbook of American Indians comments thus on this question: "It is possible that in their name there is a hint that in an early day they were in the region around Lake Michigan. The term Michigamea is derived from the Algonquian words *michi*, 'great' or 'much' and *guma*, 'water,' and with variations was early used as an alternative for the 'Lake of the Illinois.' It is therefore possible that the group took its name from an early residence in the Lake Michigan region. On the other hand the same term was used to designate Big Lake in Arkansas, near which the tribe was living when first found by Joliet, and may therefore have been taken over merely in that locality. There is even a possibility that the name came from the tribe's association with the Mississippi, which was sometimes referred to by the Indians as the 'great water'."

The Illinois tribes appear never to have been extremely warlike by their own initiative. They were inclined to resort to armed conflict only as a means of defense, avoiding it whenever possible. Marquette wrote of them: "They have more humanity than all other nations I have seen in America." The Jesuit priest further characterized them as "good-natured men, tractable and easy." Father Hennepin, while attesting to their irresponsible nature, was less flattering. He wrote of them as "lazy vagabonds; timorous, pettish thieves, and so fond of their liberty, that they have no great respect for their chiefs." "Their villages," he continued, "are open and not closed with palisades, as in some other places, because they have not courage enough to defend them, for they fly away as soon as they hear their enemies approach."

Hennepin further described the Illinois in these terms: "They are tall, strong and manage their bows and arrows with great dexterity, for they did not know the use of firearms before we came to their country. * * * Besides arrows, they use two other weapons, a kind of pike and a club of wood. * * * Their cabins [are] of flat rushes which they sew together and line with the same, so that no rain can go through. * * * Their country is so fertile that it supplies them with all the necessaries of life and especially since we taught them the use of iron tools to cultivate it. * * * Polygamy is allowed amongst them and they generally marry several sisters, thinking they agree better than strangers. They are exceedingly jealous and cut the nose of their wives upon the least suspicion. * * * As to their religion, I observed that



(Courtesy of the Finley Collection, Knox College, Galesburg)

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE ILLINOIS RIVER, ITS PRINCIPAL POR- TAGES AND THE LOCATION OF INDIAN TRIBES, ARE ALL VERY INTERESTING

From LaFontan, New Voyages, London, 1735

they are very superstitious; but I could never discover that they had any worship nor any reason for their superstition. They are great gamblers as well as all the other savages I have known in America. * * * They go stark naked in the summer time, wearing only a kind of shoes made of the skins of oxen; but the winter being pretty severe in their country, though very short, they wear gowns made of the skins of wild beasts, or of oxen, which they dress and paint most curiously."

THE DECLINE OF THE ILLINOIS TRIBES

When and how the Illinois Indians won their territory or whom they dispossessed to gain it—even as they themselves were in turn dispossessed—may never be known. But their struggles to retain it and their final extermination are a matter of record written red with blood and punctuated by a succession of harrowing events. For years before the coming of the white man, it seems they were hammered by the powerful Sioux on the west and the ferocious Iroquois on the east. By a combination of history and tradition, we have knowledge of some of the devastating encounters they had with these enemies prior to the arrival of the French within their region. These chronicles were recorded by early French historians from mouth-to-mouth accounts handed down by surviving Indians.

An amazing story of misdirected charity is told by La Potherie in describing an incredibly sanguinary episode which took place between the Winnebagoes and the Illinois. The Winnebagoes were an extremely vigorous tribe of Siouan affinity who by dint of their aggressive spirit wedged their way into the region between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi, forming a veritable island in a sea of alien tribes. But, as is often the case in the alternating fates of primitive man, adversity came in the wake of triumph. Along toward the middle of the seventeenth century, deadly scourges of disease and famine, following close upon the heels of severe warfare, swept their ranks and reduced their number by thousands. Then it was, so La Potherie's story goes, that the Illinois, "touched with compassion for these unfortunates," sent forth 500 men, among them some of their most noted personages, with provisions to relieve the distress of the Winnebagoes. The vicissitudes the latter had just been through "which ought to have gone home to their consciences, seemed only to increase their iniquities." At first they gave evidence of much gratitude to the Illinois. They built a large cabin in which to lodge their beneficent guests, and then, in accordance with custom, arranged a festive dance in their honor. But all this hospitality proved only to be a cruel ruse. "While the Illinois were engaged in dancing," La Potherie writes, "the Puans (Winnebagoes) cut their bowstrings, and

immediately flung themselves upon the Illinois, massacred them, not sparing one man, and made a general feast of their flesh."

Knowing that vengeance from the kinfolk of their slaughtered victims was inevitable, the Winnebagoes fled to an island. This they considered a safe refuge because the Illinois, in those days at least, were not given to the use of canoes. The Illinois, learning of the calamity that had befallen their party and staggered by the loss in man-power it entailed, deferred return hostilities until the second year after the massacre. They mourned all the while, intending by their grief to move the Great Spirit to fortify them in their scheme of vengeance. At length they organized an expedition and in the dead of winter crossed on the ice to the island camp of the enemy. The Winnebagoes were absent on a hunt but the Illinois soon overtook them and laid siege. "So vigorous was their attack that they killed, wounded, or made prisoners of all the Puans except a few who escaped. * * * The Illinois returned to their country, well avenged."

But revenge did not restore the warriors who had been massacred and the net loss to both sides was tremendous. The Illinois had scarcely begun to recover from this experience when they were called upon to repulse the dreaded Iroquois. Years before, the five great Iroquoian tribes—the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca—had formed their alliance which became the most powerful fighting combination known among Indians of historic times. Casting envious eyes on the West, they had become the terror of all tribes of the valley and lake region. The valiant stand made in 1655 by the Illinois against the westward tide of Iroquois conquest is described by Nicolas Perrot: "The Iroquois steadily advanced until they encountered a small *Illinoet* village; they killed the women and children therein, for the men fled toward their own people, who were not very far from that place. The *Illinoets* immediately assembled their forces, and hastened after the Iroquois, who had no suspicion of an enemy. Overtaking the enemy at nightfall, the *Illinoets* later attacked them, and slew many of them. Other *Illinoet* villagers, who were hunting at various places in that vicinity, having learned what had occurred, hastened to find their tribesmen who had just dealt a blow at the Iroquois. Assembling all their warriors, they encouraged one another, made a hasty march, surprised the enemy, and utterly defeated them in battle; for there were very few Iroquois who returned to their own villages. This was the first acquaintance of the *Illinoets* with the Iroquois; it proved baneful to them (the Iroquois) but they have well avenged themselves for it."

Thus began years of unrelenting hostilities between the Illinois and the Iroquois.

The continuous oppression of their enemies put the Illinois tribes in

a receptive mood toward the French. "Their sufferings," Beckwith observes, "rendered them pliable to the voice of the missionary; and, in their weakness, they hailed with delight the coming of the Frenchman with his promise of protection assured with gifts of guns and powder." And so, when Marquette stopped at the great Kaskaskia village in 1673, the Indians were so enthusiastic in their reception that they prevailed upon the priest to come back and preach to them. This he did at great expense to his already failing health, having to endure tremendous hardships in negotiating the rigorous trip from Green Bay. Returning in the spring of 1675, he was welcomed, as he himself put it, "like an angel from Heaven." Opportunely, it was on Easter Sunday that he called the natives together in a vast outdoor convocation and, thoroughly conversant with the Algonquian language and all of its dialects, he told them the story of Christianity. Then on Easter Sunday he dedicated his mission as the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. The Indians seemed to be impressed and wanted Marquette to remain with them but he was physically unable to do so. In a few days he began his return to Green Bay, only to be overtaken by death on the way. Under the influence of this friendly ministrations the village grew from seventy-four lodges when Marquette first arrived in 1673 to 351 when Father Allouez, another Jesuit priest, came in 1677 to carry on the work Marquette had so heroically started.

At this juncture, however, a new trend in French colonization policies asserted itself, which was to make its effect felt on the Indian inhabitants. Governor Frontenac believed the Jesuits were wielding too much influence over the destinies of the West, and did not look with approbation upon their dream of building a vast Christian state among the natives centering around Marquette's original mission. Rather, he adopted a policy of developing the trade of the new country and exploiting the hunting and trapping proclivities of the Indians on a strictly commercial basis. Accordingly, he sent La Salle, "the first promoter of big business in the West," to pursue the task of colonizing the Illinois Country. And with La Salle, instead of the black-robed Jesuits, he sent three brown-robed friars of the rival order, the Recollets.

As a result of the shift in affairs, the Illinois tribes at first did not give La Salle the same friendly welcome they had given Marquette a few years earlier. They were suspicious of his motives. They believed he was in league with the Iroquois and had come to deliver them into the hands of their despised foe. La Salle made his entry into the Illinois Valley from the north in the winter of 1679-80. Finding the Kaskaskia village deserted, its inhabitants away on their winter hunt, he continued down the river until he came to the Peoria tribe. The Peorias viewed his coming with open misgivings but were somewhat taken aback at

his audacity when he and his tiny company landed with their guns in an attitude of battle. This is interpreted as a shrewd device on the part of La Salle, ever a student of Indian nature, to impress them with his boldness and win them over. They at once adopted a conciliatory spirit and soon were rubbing the Frenchmen's legs with bear grease—a gesture of extreme hospitality. But their suspicions were soon revived. Almost simultaneously with La Salle's arrival, a Mascouten scout named Monso came to the village bearing gifts and, in the eerie light of a midnight council fire, gave dire warnings that the Frenchman meant no good by them. Monso told the Peorias, according to Father Hennepin, a member of La Salle's party, "that Monsieur La Salle was a great friend of the Iroquois, who were to follow him speedily, with some of the Europeans from Canada, to invade them; and that he [Monso] was sent by some Europeans themselves who could not approve that treachery of their countrymen, to give them notice thereof, that they might not be surprised." "The Illinois were assembled in council all night," Hennepin's narrative continues. * * * The next day they appeared much indifferent and mistrusting. As they seemed to contrive something against us, we began to be uneasy; but Monsieur La Salle, who suspected that their sudden alteration toward us was the effect of a false report, made such presents to one of their chiefs that he told him all the particulars of the embassy and negotiations of Monso; and thereby enabled him to remove the jealousy of the Illinois and confound the wicked designs of our enemies."

La Salle blamed the Jesuits, and particularly Father Allouez, for attempting to stir the hostility of the Illinois tribes against him. He even blamed intrigues of the Jesuits for the attack which the Iroquois made on the Illinois in the fall of 1680—the same invasion for which the Illinois at the outset held La Salle responsible. From the turn of events, it will be seen, however, that both were wrong; that the Iroquois waged their campaign against the Illinois, not because of any conspiracy with the Jesuits on one hand or La Salle on the other, but because they knew the friendly relations La Salle was seeking to build up with the western tribes would divert this lucrative fur trade from them [the Iroquois] and their allies of war and trade, the British. Their barter with the British at Albany had made the Iroquois economically dependent upon the white man and had forced them to make fur trading their chief occupation. The fur supply of their own country was nearing exhaustion; without peltries they could not buy the white man's merchandise which had become necessary to their lives. They, therefore, determined either to force the western Indians to trade through them so they could realize the profits of middleman; or, if they failed in this, to conquer the territory and exploit it themselves. To separate the western tribes from the invading French

became as important to them as maintaining the friendship of the British.

It was in the fall following La Salle's arrival that the Iroquois delivered their staggering blow against the Illinois from which the latter never fully recovered. Appearing unexpectedly from the East, a band of some 500 Iroquoian warriors augmented by 100 Miamis whom they had intimidated into joining them moved on the Kaskaskia village and sent the inhabitants fleeing in terror down the Illinois River and to refuge across the Mississippi. The invaders followed close in pursuit of the fugitives and spread wanton destruction as they went, burning towns, laying waste to cornfields, digging up burial grounds and scattering the remains of sacred dead with fiendish abandon. They left the whole valley in desolation and, upon reaching the Mississippi, climaxed their orgy of desecration by attacking the Tamaroa tribe which failed to join the others in flight to the other side. The Tamaroa warriors were able to flee but some 700 women and children were massacred amid indescribable scenes of horror.

La Salle was away at the time of this holocaust but his trusted lieutenant, Tonti, was living in the Kaskaskia village when the Iroquois struck. La Salle had gone back to Fort Frontenac for supplies and after mutineers had pillaged and destroyed Fort Creve Coeur near the Peoria village, Tonti and five companions remaining loyal to him went to dwell with the Kaskaskias pending La Salle's return. By this contact he sought to allay the doubts that still lingered among these tribesmen as to the friendliness of La Salle's enterprise.

It is no great wonder that the Indians' suspicions flared fiercely anew that November day when a lone hunter came running breathlessly in off the prairies with the dreadful news that the Iroquois were coming. The catastrophe long threatened was at hand. As warriors in wild confusion rushed their women, children and old men off to safety down the river and arrayed themselves in the habiliments of battle, groups of them clustered about Tonti and his men openly accusing them and their leader of conniving with the Iroquois to exterminate them. Their feeling against the Frenchmen was increased to fever pitch at dawn when returning scouts reported they had sighted a man in French costume among the advancing Iroquois and the belief arose that he was La Salle. Only was Tonti able to sway the Indians' determination to have vengeance upon him by going boldly into the ranks of the Iroquois and attempting, by all the means of diplomacy and persuasion at his command, to stop their onslaught. His brave efforts at mediation seem to have had the effect of delaying the invaders long enough to give the Illinois their chance to flee and thus avoid a bloody battle on the spot; but in so far as being able to change the resolute course of the Iroquois, he might as well have tried to stop the flow of Niagara.

At daybreak the Illinois had crossed the river in their canoes to form a blockade against the enemy, now dangerously near, and an exchange of hostilities had started when Tonti rushed headon into the lines of the Iroquois with his peace proposals. Pending his negotiations, firing ceased and the Illinois recrossed to their village. They seem to have been outnumbered because many of their young braves were away hunting; moreover they were fearful of the Iroquois' savage methods of warfare. So when anxious blood-thirsty bands of the enemy began swimming over, the alarm of the Illinois was renewed and they decided hastily on the expedient of flight. They set fire to their lodges as if to deprive the Iroquois of the pleasure; entered their canoes, and started off down the river, picking up their families on the way.

The Iroquois were somewhat baffled by this move but were even more disconcerted by the presence of Tonti and his men. They knew the Frenchmen could call down the wrath of Governor Frontenac upon them by reporting their dire deeds. They tried and failed to buy Tonti's secrecy with beaver skins, and had to satisfy themselves with forcing the tiny white band to leave the country and return to Mackinac. Relieved of this restraining influence, the Iroquois then took after the fleeing Illinois, not content until they had run them across the Mississippi and wrought death among the ill-fated Tamaroas.

After the Iroquois had withdrawn, the Illinois tribes gradually returned to their own country. Once more a large part of them took up their residence in the same vicinity where the destroyed Kaskaskia village had stood. Their doubts of La Salle's purpose now completely dispelled, they did not hesitate to join with the Miamis, Weas, Piankashaws, Shawnees and other tribes around Fort St. Louis which the French leader built high on The Rock in 1682. According to Franquelin's map of 1684, the Illinois tribes contributed some 1,200 warriors to the 3,880 gathered by La Salle on the plains surrounding the fort for mutual protection against the common enemy—the Iroquois. Nor was this precaution ill advised. The Iroquois were not satisfied with the outcome of their recent attack and were more jealous than ever of La Salle's latest move in confederating the western tribes. They made one more vicious assault but this time found the opposition forces too strong for them to penetrate. They sent an expedition against Fort St. Louis in March of 1684 but after a futile siege of six days, gave up and retired. Tonti, left in command of the fort by La Salle, thereafter directed frequent Indian parties against the enemy and with no small effect. On one occasion, seeking to impress the French authorities with the value of his operations, he asked the Indians to estimate the number of the enemy they had killed and their "scalp list" showed that 334 Iroquois men and boys and 111

women and girls had fallen by their guns and tomahawks. Tonti himself led an expedition of 200 Indians and sixteen Frenchmen to Detroit in 1687 to participate in a campaign against the Iroquois. Under the stress of these repeated hostilities, the morale of these redoubtable warriors was starting to weaken. They opened negotiations for an armistice in 1694 but it was not until the peace of Ryswick between the French and British was signed in 1697 that the struggle of the Iroquois against the French and Indian allies was terminated. Even then the Iroquois treaty itself was not finally concluded until 1701.

Meanwhile, the power of the Illinois tribes was waning as the encroachments of their enemies closer at hand caused them gradually to abandon their valley lands and migrate southward. When the French moved Fort St. Louis from "The Rock" to Lake Pimiteau (Peoria Lake) in the winter of 1691-92, the Jesuit mission and attendant Indians moved with it. The vicinity of the new fort, where the ill-fated Fort Creve Coeur had been built by La Salle a little more than a decade before, had long been occupied by the Peoria tribe and now it appears that the Kaskaskias, who still comprised the main body of the Illinois confederacy, joined with their kinsman in occupying this location. A few years later, however, when at the outset of the eighteenth century the French discontinued this fortress, the Kaskaskias, no longer able to withstand the pressure of their foes, looked to the southland for refuge. Learning that the French intended to build a fort at the mouth of the Mississippi in Louisiana, they started out with that as their destination, but Father Gravier who, as successor to Marquette and Allouez, had become their spiritual adviser, prevailed upon them to halt in the southern part of our present state. Here at the mouth of the river that henceforth was to bear their name they established their new home; here the Jesuits re-established their mission, and near by sprang up a French community named Kaskaskia which, after more than two centuries of glamorous history, is traced as the first permanent white settlement in Illinois. The Cahokia, Tamaroa and Michigamie tribes already were established farther up the Mississippi in the American Bottom, the former two having merged into one and the latter having fled from the west side of the great river for protection. The Peorias stayed some years longer at their old site on Lake Pimiteau, and scattered bands of the kindred tribes continued from time to time to be found in the Illinois Valley, even as far north as the old center of population at The Rock. But rival tribes, having been driven from their former homes in the lake region by the Iroquoian thrust, were steadily gaining the foothold which enabled them in time completely to supersede the once dominating Illinois people in the valley.

THE FOX WAR

At this point the Fox tribe takes the center of the stage. Now that the incursions of the Iroquois had been stopped, the Foxes took their place as the prevailing menace to the Illinois tribes and their white friends, the French. These new trouble-makers have been characterized as "the restless Ishmaelites of the lakes; their hands against every man, and every man against them." Like the Iroquois, they had a hatred of long standing for the Illinois and an irreconcilable opposition to the invasion of the French; but whereas the Iroquois were linked economically with the British in their enmity to the French, the attitude of the Foxes was more that of one race against another of a different color seeking to supplant it. Their chief, Kiala, may be looked upon as the true forerunner of Tecumseh, Pontiac and Black Hawk in the gallant but futile stand the Indians made from time to time to keep out the white man. The war of the Foxes became almost suicidal in its outcome and the fate which befell this tribe was scarcely less tragic than that of the Illinois federation.

Frequently the name by which an Indian tribe is known was given it by the first white people with whom it had contact, and such was the case with the Foxes. In their own tongue, these people called themselves Musquiakie (or Meshkwakihug), while other Algonquian tribes designated them as Utugamig (Outagami), meaning "people of the other shore." But they became known to the French as Renards and to English-speaking whites as Foxes because the first explorers encountered a clan of the main tribe bearing the name of Wagohug which, in their native language, means "red fox." With other tribes the Foxes were driven westward by the Iroquois from lower Michigan in the seventeenth century. They were first found by the French on the Wolf River but later they settled on the Fox-Wisconsin portage. Though they are described as "stingy, avaricious, thieving, passionate, and quarrelsome," no doubt has ever been raised as to their courage.

Alvord summarizes the attitude of the Foxes toward the French and its consequences in the "Centennial History of Illinois." "Their antagonistic feeling for the French," he states, "arose at an early date and was caused by their contact with the unruly, brutal, and deceitful fur traders by whom 'the seeds of distrust were sown which were to blossom later into a harvest of hatred and war.' Friction with the whites continued almost constantly. During the wars waged with the Iroquois confederacy by Governor Frontenac the Foxes openly sympathized with the Indians. When the French government adopted an anti-fur trade policy and withdrew its garrisons from the West, the Foxes became the dominant power around Green Bay and the portage, which they closed to all traders carrying merchandise to their enemies on the West, the Sioux.

Their position made them protagonists of a pan-Indian sentiment. Their temporary power and success inspired in them the desire of rivalry with the white man.

"The Fox war began in 1712 when a band of Foxes, visitors for two years at Detroit, were slaughtered by their Indian neighbors, aided by the French commandant. The wilderness from that date resounded with the war whoop. Indian tribe warred on Indian tribe. The secret preparation, the long line of stealthy warriors gliding through the forest or paddling guardedly along streams, the surprise, the murder of men, women and children, the torture and burning at the stake, were common events in the region that the Jesuit missionaries had once hoped to make the home of a peaceful agricultural people. The Illinois Country was particularly affected, for there had long existed a feud between the Illinois and the Foxes; and the latter's next of kin and allies, the Kickapoos and Mascoutens, were near neighbors, dwelling in the valleys of the Rock and Fox rivers. The Valley of the Illinois River became the scene of a frightful contest between the red men, one party being assisted by their white protectors. In 1714, the Foxes were successful in killing or taking prisoner seventy-seven of the Illinois Indians."

After that, the oppressors made attacks at frequent intervals, killing and destroying with savage ferocity exceeded only by that of the Iroquois. In 1722, a Fox war band besieged a village of the Peorias and, after taking eighty women and children hostages, forced that tribe to abandon the Illinois Valley and move southward to their kinfolk at Cahokia.

All the while, the French, aided by tribes friendly to their cause, were striving to subdue their disconsolate foe. The Foxes, however, proved to be wary opponents and for years the counter efforts of the French were of little effect. In 1715, a plan to concentrate the tribes south of the lakes with those of the lake region for a gigantic offensive against the Foxes fell far short of its mark. An epidemic of measles prevented the Weas from participating, and the Hurons and their allies from Detroit were late in arriving at the appointed place. They finally did appear just in time to call back the Illinois contingent, which had started for home. An attack was made on a band of Fox allies, the Mascoutens, with casualties of 100 or more, but as the allies were retiring a force of 400 Foxes fell in back of them and were repelled only after a costly battle that lasted from daybreak until mid-afternoon. Again, the following year, the government of New France sent an expedition of Frenchmen and Indians, numbering 800 in all, against the Fox village in Wisconsin, but the French commander, Louvigny, instead of wiping out the enemy as he had been expected to do, merely reduced them to desperation then let them off on easy terms and withdrew.

The bloody enterprises of the Foxes continued and all efforts to pacify

them by mediation came to naught. On one occasion, the commandant of New France made peace at Green Bay with the Foxes and two of their allies, the Sacs and Winnebagoes, but created a situation even more perilous by omitting the Illinois tribes from the agreement. The Illinois were loud and bitter in their protests and not until a deputation had been sent to France to plead with the court was this *faux pas* corrected. Even after another treaty was patched up in 1726, the Foxes broke faith by attacking and killing a company of French soldiers from Fort Chartres; and by other outrages showed no disposition to deviate from their belligerent course. The French, now thoroughly out of patience, adopted an unrelenting determination to remove the obstacle of this recalcitrant tribe at any cost. In the spring of 1726, Marchant de Lignery led an army of 400 Frenchmen and almost 1,000 Indians against them. The Foxes had been warned and, though their villages were burned and their crops destroyed, they escaped the full force of the blow. But while the expedition failed in its immediate purpose, it did have the effect of showing the tribes allied with the Foxes that the French meant business. The result was that, one by one, these tribes withdrew their support from the Fox cause and affirmed their friendship for the French. Even the closely-related Kickapoos and Mascoutens deserted their hard-fighting ally and made peace with the Illinois. The Sioux, with whom the Foxes hoped to find refuge west of the Mississippi, also turned their backs on them. Thus left alone to their fate, it became the Foxes' turn to bid for peace, but by the same turn of events the French now were in position to play the high hand. The positive position the French took is epitomized in the message the Canadian governor sent to all the friendly tribes, exhorting them "to destroy the Foxes, and not suffer on this earth a demon capable of opposing our friendly alliance."

This left the Foxes but one thing to do; that was to accept the offer of the Iroquois to give them a haven in the East. Accordingly, some 300 warriors and a large proportion of women and children started their long trek eastward in the summer of 1730. They had not gone far, however, when the French and Indian allies, mobilizing hurriedly upon learning of their retreat, besieged them in one of the most sanguinary episodes in the annals of the red man in Illinois.

The details of this struggle were for many years hidden away in the French historical records, the exact spot where it took place obscured by doubt. Finally, John F. Steward, by a careful study of the records and the geography of the territory involved, advanced the highly plausible theory that the conflict was waged on an island-like slope at the point where Little and Big Rock creeks unite and empty into the Fox River of Illinois. His researches have been recorded by the Illinois State Historical Society and as a result of them an inscribed boulder has been

placed in Kendall County to mark the purported site of the Foxes' tragic downfall. This is near the place where the ancient Indian town of Maramech stood as shown on Franquelin's map of 1684, and the site is therefore known as Maramech Hill.

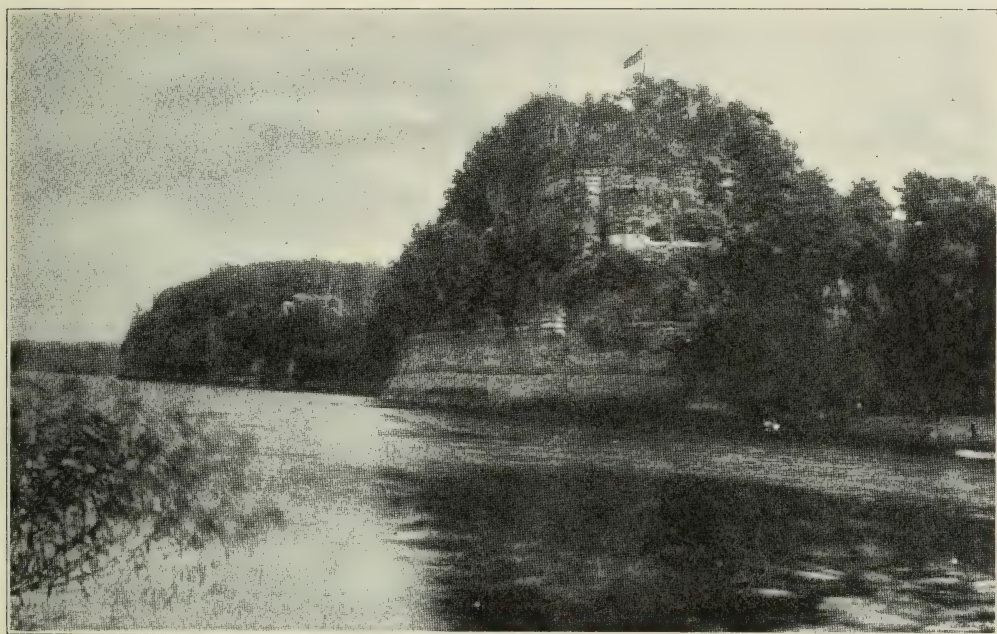
It is Steward's conclusion that, after leaving their homes in Wisconsin, the retreating Indians took a southeasterly course by following the deep-worn Kishwaukee trail leading to old Maramech. They were beset along the way by the Kickapoos and Mascoutens who sent messengers hurrying to warn the French commandants at Fort Chartres, Green Bay and St. Joseph River that they were fleeing. When the Foxes reached the river, according to Steward's contention, they stopped there and, realizing that their enemies were moving upon them, undertook to fortify their position by throwing up a group of temporary shelters and a crude palisade around them. Here, like animals in a trap, they were surrounded by an army of some 1,400 French and Indians, converging from three directions. St. Ange, the French commandant at Fort Chartres, led one contingent from the Southwest; another band of several hundred marched from St. Joseph to the East under the command of De Villiers; and a third came from the Miami post to the North under Desnoyelles' leadership. All of them joined with the Kickapoos and Mascoutens who were already pressing in close on their erstwhile friends. The siege got under way on August 17 when St. Ange, the first of the white men to arrive, encountered forty Fox hunters and drove them into their fortification. For twenty-three days the allies hammered incessantly against the Foxes' pitiful little stronghold. The latter, early seeing the desperation of their situation, pleaded for mercy but to no avail. De Villiers at one point favored negotiations for peace but his proposal was bitterly opposed by the Illinois warriors who were out for vengeance. When Desnoyelles arrived, he brought strict orders that no compromise be granted. The despair and destitution which prevailed within the lines of the Foxes can only be imagined. The morale of the besiegers was little better, mutiny at times threatening to split their concentration asunder. The Sacs, relenting their desertion of their kinsmen and moved by their sorry plight, tried to help them by sending them ammunition and assisting them to escape. Only timely intervention by St. Ange prevented open conflict within the ranks of the allies when other tribes discovered the Sacs' plot. As the weary days wore on, hunger and exhaustion weakened both sides. Two hundred Illinois tribesmen, no longer the warriors they once were, gave up the struggle and deserted on September 7. The allies now were "within two pistol shots" of the enemy lines. St. Ange had built a small fort with the intention of cutting off the Foxes' communication with water supply, but discovery of a subterranean source within their stockade saved the beleaguered tribe from this extremity.

The struggle had resolved itself into a stubborn contest of human endurance against time when, on the night of September 9, a severe storm broke the deadlock. While, in the fury of the tempest, the besiegers relaxed their vigilance, the Foxes found an opening and made their escape. Their respite, however, was brief. The allies, discovering their departure, soon overtook them the next day and, closing in upon them with merciless intensity, almost completely annihilated the whole band. It has been estimated that 300 Fox warriors and 1,000 women and children were killed or taken prisoner; that only fifty or sixty of this once powerful tribe escaped.

Though this defeat abjectly reduced the Foxes and deviated their course of action, it did not spell their finish as the French had hoped it would. They had amazing powers of recuperation. Throughout their years of fighting, they had been able to repair the constant drain on man-power by a policy of adopting their prisoners instead of killing or enslaving them. It is likely that scattered bands were not involved in the disastrous battle of 1730 and these, with those who survived its fury, succeeded in perpetuating the tribe so that, for years to come, it remained a potent factor in Illinois history. Not many years afterwards they formed their insoluble union with the Sacs and settled down upon the banks of the Rock River where, a century after their defeat at the hands of the French and Indian allies, their resentment to the white man's encroachments again found expression in the Black Hawk war.

THE STORY OF STARVED ROCK

In the meantime, however, the pan-Indian spirit was to be championed by an earlier native leader, the great Pontiac. His conspiracy to halt the inrush of white immigration, the collapse of his scheme, and his own assassination led up to the next episode in the red man's destinies in the valley. This train of events brings us back to the ill-starred Illinois tribes, for it resulted in still further removing them from the scene. French rule had been overthrown and the British were in control of the West when Pontiac asserted his leadership. As chief of the Ottawas and trusted counsellor to their allies, as one who had been courted and consulted by the French and feared by the British, he felt it his destiny to drive out the invader and restore his Indian people to their old freedom. From the shores of Lake Superior to the banks of the Ohio, to the wilderness of Wisconsin and on into the Valley of the Illinois, Pontiac's message was carried. The tribes of the Illinois Country, however, seem never to have taken an active part in his uprising. The British, upon assuming control of Fort Chartres, were able to form a treaty with the



STARVED ROCK

Indians of this region and exercise a fairly complete control over them. It is told that when Pontiac visited the Illinois in 1764 and found them indifferent to his appeal to join his forces, he threatened to "consume their tribes as fire consumes the grass of the prairies." But after his final defeat it was to the Illinois Country that he came for refuge, and it was here that he met his ignoble death. It is generally recorded that Pontiac was slain during a drunken brawl at Cahokia in 1769. Accounts of this incident vary and some authorities even contend that the warrior killed at Cahokia was only a boastful imposter and that the murder of the real Pontiac occurred at a somewhat later date farther northward. At any rate, it seems agreed that he died at the hands of an Indian affiliated with the once dominant Illinois federation, and, though the British may have been the instigators, these unfortunate people were given full credit for the murder by Pontiac's supporters.

The narrative from here on is gained from tradition rather than written documents. There were no longer careful French historians to record in minute detail what transpired. As a result the exact events which followed Pontiac's death will ever be obscured by doubt and colored by legend. It seems, however, that the murder aroused vengeance among all the tribes of the region friendly to Pontiac and that there followed a relentless succession of attacks upon what remained of the Illinois federation. Out of this situation was born the popular legend of Starved Rock which, though conflicting in its details and often discredited by historians, tells how a harassed band of Illinois was driven in desperation to the protection of the same rocky summit overlooking the river which, a century earlier, as Fort St. Louis of the French had given haven to their forebears. Here, so the story goes, the greatly outnumbered Illinois were able by their position on this natural fortification to withstand their enemies until their water supply was cut off and they were literally starved out. Some accounts have it that "thus surrounded by relentless avengers, they took one last lingering look at their beautiful hunting grounds, spread like a panorama along the gently rolling river beneath them, and then with true Indian fortitude laid themselves down and expired without a sigh or tear." Other narrators relate that, instead of giving up without a struggle, they were rather forced by the pinch of starvation into submission and upon relinquishing their stronghold were massacred wholesale by their foes. There is disagreement as to whether the entire band was exterminated or a few escaped. Perhaps the most plausible version is that told by John Dean Caton, based on reminiscences given him by Meachelle, an old Pottawatomi chief, who claimed to have witnessed the siege. Because of the prominence of Starved Rock as a landmark of the Illinois Valley and the glamour of this tale

which gives it its name, it has been deemed worthy to quote in some detail Caton's account of the episode:

"In the war thus waged by the allies against the Illinois, the latter suffered disaster after disaster till the sole remnants of that once proud nation, whose name had been mentioned with respect from Lake Superior to the mouth of the Ohio and from the Mississippi to the Wabash, now found sufficient space upon the half-acre of ground which crowns the summit of Starved Rock. As its sides are perpendicular, except on the south where it may be ascended with difficulty by a sort of natural stairway, where some of the steps are a yard high and but a few inches wide, and not more than two can ascend abreast, ten men could repel ten thousand with the means of warfare then at their command. The allies made no effort to take the fort by storm, but closely besieged it on every side. On the north or river side, the rock overhangs the river somewhat, and tradition tells us how the confederates placed themselves in canoes under the shelving rock and cut the thongs of the besieged when they lowered their vessels to obtain water from the river, and so reduced them by thirst, but Meachelle, so far as I know, never mentioned this as one of the means resorted to by the confederates to reduce their enemies, nor from an examination of the ground do I think this probable, but they depended upon a lack of provisions, which we can readily appreciate must soon occur to savage people, who rarely anticipate the future by storing up supplies. No improvident people could have subsisted long in such a place. How long they did hold out, Meachelle did not, and probably could not, tell us; but at last the time came when the unfortunate remnant could hold out no longer. They awaited but a favorable opportunity to attempt their escape. This was at last afforded by a dark and stormy night, when, led by their few remaining warriors, all stole in profound silence down the steep and narrow declivity to be met by a solid wall of their enemies surrounding the point, where alone a sortie would be made, and which had been confidently expected. The horrid scene that ensued can be better imagined than described. No quarter was asked or given. For a time the howlings of the tempest were drowned by the yells of combatants and the shrieks of victims. * * * Here was enacted the fitting finale to that work of death which had been commenced, scarcely a mile away, a century before by the still more savage and terrible Iroquois.

"Still, all (of the Illinois) were not destroyed. Eleven of the most athletic warriors, in the darkness and confusion of the fight, broke through the besieging lines. They had marked well from their high perch on the isolated rock, the little nook below, where their enemies had moored at least a part of their canoes, and to these they threw themselves, and hurried down the rapids below. * * * It was truly a race for life. If they could reach St. Louis, they were safe; if overtaken, there was no hope. We must leave to the imagination the details of a race where the stake was so momentous to the contestants. As life is sweeter even than revenge, we may safely assume that the pursued were impelled to even greater exertions than the pursuers. Those who ran for life won the race. They reached St. Louis before their enemies came into sight, and told their appalling tale to the commandant of the fort, from whom they received assurances of protection."

Caton seems to have erred in assuming that all the Illinois tribesmen who then remained were involved in the Starved Rock siege, and that so few as eleven survived. We find evidence of remnants of these peoples until after the start of the nineteenth century. The decimation of their numbers had, however, been going on steadily ever since the Iroquois attack in 1680. When the French made an enumeration of tribes in 1736, a total of 600 warriors was credited to the Illinois federation, classified as follows: Michigamies at Fort Chartres, 250; Kaskaskias, six leagues below, 100; Peoria and the Rock tribes, 50; Cahokias and Tamaroas, 200. When Gen. William H. Harrison became governor of Indiana Territory in 1800, he wrote the secretary of war that there were only about thirty Illinois warriors left, of whom twenty-five were Kaskaskias, four Peorias and only one Michigamie. He added that "a furious war with the Sacs and Kickapoos reduced them to that miserable remnant which had taken refuge among the white people in the towns of Kaskaskia and Ste. Genevieve."

OTHER TRIBES IN THE VALLEY

The hunting grounds of the valley meanwhile had passed into the possession of the hunting tribes of the Northwest, the Pottawatomies, Kickapoos, Sacs and Foxes, and others, which had been forced to find new homes. The Pottawatomies were the largest of these tribes. Senachwine, their chief, was greatly beloved by his braves, and his tribe was generally honored and respected by the whites. So far as we know, the first Pottawatomies who ever saw the country south of Lake Michigan, attended Marquette in 1675, when he came from Green Bay to establish a mission among the Illinois Indians. How soon after this the Pottawatomies left their old home on Green Bay and sought more hospitable regions farther south, we are not informed; nor can we tell whether the emigration was gradual, or if they broke up altogether, but as we find them in their southern homes in different bands, the probabilities are that they left in parties. A portion settled on the Saginaw Bay in Michigan, who were subsequently known as the Pottawatomies of Saginaw, or of Huron. Others descended as far as Detroit, and settled in that neighborhood. Others found their way to the St. Joseph River, on the east side of Lake Michigan; and others, it may be presumed, come directly to northern Illinois, though they spread from Michigan into Illinois.

The event at Starved Rock in 1769 appears to have secured to the Pottawatomies all the territory then belonging to the Illinois, and the exclusive right to that land which was undisputed by other tribes. It extended their possessions to the lands of the Peorias on Peoria Lake. They occupied to the Wabash and as far south as Danville and even beyond. On the other side they occupied to the Rock River, though their

right for a strip of land on the east side of that river was disputed by the Sac and Fox Indians who ranged the prairies west of there and beyond the Mississippi. They extended northward into Wisconsin as far as Milwaukee.

The history of the Kickapoo Indians helps to fix some points in the history of Illinois. The Kickapoos were on the Wisconsin in 1690; on the Rock River in 1720; and were allies of the Miamis, whose location was in Indiana and Ohio. In 1763, they were found on the Wabash, at the eastern border of Illinois. This section they claimed the right to cede in the treaty of 1819, having inherited it and been in possession of it for over sixty years. In the war which followed the death of Pontiac in 1769, and in which occurred the events told in the legend of Starved Rock, they drove the Illinois south, and took possession of the country south and east of the Illinois River, and this country they held by right of conquest from the Illinois, as they claimed when they ceded it. So their occupancy of this region must have commenced about 1770, or soon after, and that must be the date of the retirement of the Illinois from this region.

At the time of the first white settlement, the Kickapoos were living on the Sangamon and Mackinaw rivers. They had villages on the Spoon River in Fulton County, at Kickapoo Creek, at Elkhart Grove, on the Sangamon River, and at many other points between the Illinois and Wabash. They were more civilized, industrious and cleanly than the other tribes in Illinois, and their warriors were far famed for valor and bravery. They were bitter enemies of the whites and for more than a century committed many atrocities on the settlers in the southern part of the state. They were foremost in the battles with Harmer, St. Clair, and Wayne, and led in the bloody charge at Tippecanoe.

The Kickapoos' last attack on the Illinois was near Kaskaskia, after the Illinois had retired to the southern part of the state. This great battle took place in 1785 between the Kickapoos and Pottawatomies on one side, and the Kaskaskias and allies on the other, in which there was a terrible slaughter of the latter.

THE PERIOD OF CESSION

With the start of American settlement of the Illinois territory toward the close of the eighteenth century, began the process of cession of Indian lands which, within a few decades, was to oust the native tribes from this domain and, by treaty and purchase, force them westward and into ultimate oblivion.

Both the Pottawatomies and Kickapoos laid claims to vast stretches of land in Illinois and Indiana, covering not only each other's claims, but



BLACK HAWK

From J. B. Patterson's Autobiography of Black Hawk, 1882

also those ceded by the Illinois tribes and later by the Sacs and Foxes. If one is to believe the maps of the various Indian purchases, the United States bought the Illinois country several times, but these conflicts are almost invariably in the northern part of the state, between the new tribes. The southern portion of the state was the property of the Piankashaws on the east and the Illinois on the west, and their claim was never disputed, although the northern Peoria claim was protested by Sac, Fox, Kickapoo, and Pottawatomi. Some of this conflict can be explained as the result of the nomadic habits of the newly arrived tribes. It is also sometimes suspected that the Indian was willing to sell not only the land belonging to himself, but to any other group not represented.

The first cession of territory demanded of these tribes of Illinois was made by the treaty of Greenville, Ohio, in 1769, consisting of "one piece of land, six miles square, at the mouth of the Chicago River, emptying into the southwest end of Lake Michigan, where a fort formerly stood; one piece twelve miles square near the mouth of the Illinois River; and one piece six miles square at the old Peoria Fort and village; near the south end of the Illinois Lake, on the said Illinois River." In 1803 by a treaty at Vincennes the greater part of southern Illinois was ceded by the Illinois federation and other tribes; and by a treaty in the following year signed at St. Louis, the Sacs and Foxes ceded a great tract of country on both sides of the Mississippi, extending on the east bank from the mouth of the Illinois River to the head of that river, and thence to the Wisconsin River. The Piankishaws ceded the last of their claims on December 30, 1805; the Sac and Fox on September 13, and 14, 1815. In 1816 a treaty was concluded with the united tribes of Ottawas, Chippewas, and Pottawatomies at St. Louis. The boundaries established by this treaty are the only ones that have found a place upon the published county maps of the state. The territory ceded is marked by lines drawn from a point on Lake Michigan ten miles north, and south of the mouth of Chicago Creek, and following the general direction of the Des Plaines to a point north of the Illinois on the Fox River, ten miles from its mouth, and similarly on the south on the Kankakee River.

In 1818 the Pottawatomies ceded the larger part of their remaining possessions in Illinois. At Edwardsville, on September 25, 1818, the Peorias, Kaskaskias, Michigamies, Cahokias, and Tamaroas ceded a tract comprising most of southern and much of central Illinois. The significance of this cession would have been much greater had it not been that it was made by weak tribes, while the powerful Kickapoos still claimed all that part of the ceded tract lying north of the parallel of thirty-nine degrees, a little to the north of the mouth of the Illinois River. However, the following year, July 30, 1819, to be exact, the treaty of Edwardsville was drawn up with the Kickapoo nation, annuities were paid them, and

they went westward to a reservation on the Osage. By 1822, about 2,000 had removed, and only about 400 remained in Illinois.

In 1829 the Ottawas, Chippewas, Pottawatomies, Kaskaskias and Winnebagoes claimed land in the state, although only about 6,000 of the more than 25,000 members of these tribes resided within its borders. The eight members of the Kaskaskia tribe held a small reservation near the Kaskaskia River and about 200 still lived on the Mackinaw River, but were soon to move. By a treaty of July 29, 1829, the Chippewas, Ottawas, and Winnebagoes gave up their claims in northern Illinois. There still remained the Pottawatomie tribe, and not until September 26, 1833, when a treaty ceded their claims, was Illinois entirely free from Indian claims.

The dispersal of the red man was not accomplished entirely without disturbance. Encounters with disconsolate Indians made up an exciting chapter in the life of the early frontiersman. It is not to be wondered that the native tribesman looked upon the white invasion with growing resentment. First they had been deprived of their primitive independence and now the rapid extension of the white man's farms and villages was even taking away their opportunities to hunt and trap for peltries that would enable them to trade for the goods they had learned to require. As one historian puts it, "If in the course of contact with shrewd traders who befuddled them with a strange fiery liquor and reduced them from economic self-sufficiency to abject dependence, the Indians came to show themselves suspicious, treacherous, greedy and oftentimes ill-natured and unreasonable, it is not a logical deduction to conclude that the dusky aborigines were an essentially inferior race who deserved nothing better than to be exterminated and driven from the land of their forebears." But, again to quote this same authority, "That inexorable law which demands the expulsion of the less numerous and less civilized people before myriads of settlers better prepared to utilize the ground was in operation." Just as the Foxes had found it impossible to stop the colonizing activities of the French, and just as Pontiac had gone down in bitter defeat when he tried to stay the encroachments of the British, so, too, did Tecumseh fail in his noble efforts in the early nineteenth century to halt the cession of Indian lands and dam the inrush of American settlement. Closer at home, the reluctance of the red man to give up his hunting grounds took its final fling in the Black Hawk war of 1832, when the redoubtable Sac and Fox chieftain waged his pathetic campaign to hold on to his lands east of the Mississippi.

Annals of the pioneer settlers contain many tales of the Indians with whom they came in contact, most of them weakened and dispirited by the influences of the white man's civilization. The story of Waubansie is one of them. Waubansie was the leader of the remaining Pottawatomies in Illinois, and before he moved with his band to the government reser-

vations in the Far West in October, 1839, he signalized his departure with a deed of such barbarous cruelty that his memory will never be forgotten in Illinois. Waubansie is represented as a large, muscular man, fully six feet, three inches in height. His head presented an unusual feature for an Indian, being entirely bald save for a small scalp lock at the crown. His family consisted of one wife of middle age, very attentive to his wants; an old squaw, a wife evidently not in favor; a son, sixteen or eighteen years old; a son-in-law, with wife and three children; and two slave squaws. The evening before departing for the West, some fifty warriors gathered in Waubansie's camp, bringing with them a large supply of whiskey. They held a drunken frolic far into the night. Then the Indians moved away leaving the body of a squaw they had slain to be buried by the two white men, James McKeen and John Byers, who viewed the orgy from the banks of the Kankakee, and by whom this story was related.

Another incident that shows the savage resentment that still existed in the natives of North America, in spite of attempts at civilizing them, is related yet today. In the spring of 1830, William Davis made a claim on Big Indian Creek, twelve miles north of Ottawa, and built his cabin close by the creek bank. A few rods from his cabin he built a blacksmith shop. He also commenced building a mill, and the dam for that purpose was completed early in the spring of 1832. In the vicinity of Davis' cabin a number of men with their families had located. On Indian Creek, about six miles above Davis' cabin, was an Indian village, and its inhabitants were very angry at him for building the dam, as it prevented the fish from ascending the stream as they had previously done. Each day the Indians of the village were in the habit of coming down below the dam to fish, and on one occasion they threatened to injure Davis' family if it was not removed so that the fish could come up to the village as formerly. On May 22, 1832, they carried out their threats, and murdered all of the settlers, who had not taken advantage of Shaubena's warning to go to Ottawa, with the exception of two girls, who were held as captives.

SITES OF INDIAN TOWNS

The Indians left no enduring towns, although cities have since risen where once tepees stood about a council fire and the old chieftain held sway with as much pomp and jurisdiction as do the leaders of newly-built cities on the old Indian sites. The principal Indian trail followed along the course of the Illinois River from Oswego on the north to Piassa Bluffs in the south. Beginning at the northernmost point, we will follow the trail southward with a few words about the various villages along its course. Oswego was the home of the Pottawatomies in Kendall County who were living there with Waubansie on the creek that bears

his name. Another band of Pottawatomies under Shaubena at one time made their home near the mouth of Mason Creek in Grundy County. The Ottawas were in possession of the site where the city now stands that bears their name. It was the juncture at which the main travel of this old Indian trail turned southward. Between the present cities of Ottawa and Utica was the largest village of the Illinois Indians, termed Kaskaskia as that tribe was the chief inhabitant of it. It had some 8,000 inhabitants before the Iroquois attack in 1680, and to the Indians was a metropolis. It had about 460 lodges, extending along the banks of the Illinois River, a mile or more. Its fluctuating population cultivated the adjacent meadows and raised crops of pumpkins, beans and Indian corn. Bittman comments in his "Settlements on the Mississippi" that a man might have been boarded and lodged at the village of the Illinois the year around on condition of his working two months, one month in plowing the land and sowing the corn, and one month in the harvest.

Hennepin, Lacon, Sparland, Senachwine and other localities along the river were the homes of certain Indian clans while Indian Town, now Tiskilwa, was always a favorite resort where in later years Indians raised small fields of corn, trapped for muskrats and beavers, hunted wild game, and sold honey to the settlers in exchange for beads, whiskey, brass jewelry, and tobacco. The Indians found in these localities were Pottawatomies, with a mixture of Winnebagoes, Kickapoos, Sacs and Foxes.

The leading chiefs were Senachwine, whose principal village was on the creek that commemorates his name, one mile north of Chillicothe; and Shaubena, whose village was above Ottawa on the Illinois River. Another well-known Indian chief had a village at the mouth of Clear Creek in Putnam County. This was Shick-Shack, who was converted and became an earnest preacher of the Gospel and an ardent temperance reformer. On the site of Chillicothe was an Indian village ruled over by a chief named Gomo. He was sent as a hostage to St. Louis to insure the performance of certain treaty stipulations entered into by his tribe. Across the river in Woodford County, at what has long been known as the Big Spring, was the village of the noted chief, Black Partridge. He was a friend of the whites for a long time, but in revenge for the wanton destruction of his village, became their relentless enemy, and during the years 1813-1814 raided the settlements in the southern part of the state. Where Lacon stands a band of Indians had their village, led by a chief named Mackwhet. They were removed west of the Mississippi after the Black Hawk war. There was also a village at Sparland, but the name of the chief is not known, although it was probably governed by one of those chiefs previously mentioned.

The Peorias had their habitat in the seventeenth century at Peoria



SHABBONA ON PARADE

From daguerreotype in the possession of
Dr. William E. Walsh, Morris

Lake about the location of the present city of Peoria. This is the position where La Salle built Fort Creve Coeur and later known as Fort Clark. By 1773 only 170 warriors were left of the Peoria tribe at Fort Clark. Wesley City, in the present Tazewell County was also the scene of Indian settlements in the latter part of the seventeenth century. At the time the Black Hawk war broke out Shaubena, with his band of Pottawatomies had their wigwams and camps on the Illinois River within the present limits of the city of Pekin. Shaubena was a friend of the white man and was known by many of the early settlers. Although not so conspicuous as Tecumseh, Pontiac or Black Hawk, yet in point of merit he is regarded by some as superior to either of them. To Shaubena many of the early settlers owed the preservation of their lives, for he was ever on the alert to protect the whites.

The Mackinaw and Spoon River districts and Elkhart Grove on the Sangamon River were all localities in which Kickapoo tribes made settlements at some period in the latter part of the eighteenth or the early nineteenth centuries. The Mascoutens, although classed by some Indian historians as a band of the Illinois confederacy, seem to have been a separate tribe which had their early habitation around Green Bay, Wisconsin, and later were either forced out by other warring tribes, or voluntarily moved south into the Illinois Country. At any rate, the Mascoutens were established in a village of considerable size on the banks of the Illinois River at the present site of Beardstown, and tradition at least says, that they were driven away from that locality by the Miamis and Iroquois. On the Sangamon bottom in Richland Precinct there were a number of families of the Pottawatomies with Shick-Shack as their chieftain in 1826.

Only scattered relics remain in the Illinois Valley to attest to the occupation of the Indians. In Scott County, the finding of so many flint implements near the Carleton schoolhouse three miles south of Winchester, and upon the farm of Albert Peak, about four miles southwest of Winchester, seems to indicate that those who used them must have had villages there. On the high sand ridge, just above Naples and near the river bank, is an old Indian burying ground where the bones of so many red men rest that it is very likely there was once a permanent Indian settlement there. Mute evidences of Indian villages are yet discernible in Fulton County, and there is scarcely a timber quarter from the surface of which some collection of Indian relics has not a spear or arrow head or a stone axe. Some of the most perfect specimens of this character in existence are from Fulton County, and it is said that no single county in the United States, certainly not in the state of Illinois, has been so prolific a producer of Indian spear and arrow heads and stone axes. An Indian burying

ground extends north and south through the village of Spring Bay in Woodford County.

In the town of Morris, in Grundy County, is an Indian relic which has given rise to many conjectures. It is a cedar pole about six inches in diameter at the base, and from twenty to twenty-five feet in height standing in the center of the ancient mounds found in the village. None of the Indians with whom the early settlers came in contact could give satisfactory accounts of its erection. An Indian by the name of Clark, who joined an engineering party in charge of A. J. Matthewson, claimed that the bones dug up at the cedar pole belonged to Nucquette, a celebrated chief of the Illinois nation, who died in a battle, fought three miles east of Joliet, at a village on the north bank of Hickory Creek. The exact time of the death of Nucquette is not known, but it is generally conceded to have taken place between 1670 and 1700, so that the pole is over 200 years old. It is possible that the Indian, Clark, confused the history of Nucquette with the campaign of the Pottawatomies against the Illinois to avenge the death of Pontiac. At any rate, the cedar pole is so old that there is no authentic record of it, and it is consequently one of the most interesting of the relics the Indians have left.

Thus is the narrative of the Indians in the Illinois River Valley. Swept from their pinnacle of power in the prairie state to now almost complete oblivion is their tale of woe and sorrow. Of the tribes which gave their name to the state and various localities within it, only a small handful survive, and these are so mixed with the whites that it is doubtful whether any of them are of pure blood. The curtain has gone down forever on the tragedy of the Illinois Indian in the theater of world history.

CHAPTER V

THE DISCOVERY OF THE ILLINOIS VALLEY

In 1492 a visionary Italian dreamer by the name of Christopher Columbus, sailing under the colors of Spain, proceeding upon the ancient but ridiculous theory that the earth was round, not flat, actuated by the economic necessity of finding a new route to the silks and spices, set foot upon a small island close to the mainland of North America. A few naked savages looked on in blank amazement while these clumsy looking strangers with hair on their greasy, olive-white faces, some wearing uncomfortable steel corselets, some foppishly attired in bloomers and lace ruffles, proclaimed in a strange tongue that this land now belonged to God and Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain.

Shortly afterwards, Columbus and his band of adventurous ruffians returned to Spain. They bore with them, not the silks and spices which they had hoped to find, but two things which were to have a profound effect upon western Europe. First, they carried with them the seeds of a venereal disease gathered from the rape of some Indian women and which is supposed to have been hitherto unknown among the Caucasian race. A French army, invading Spain shortly after their return, contracted it. From them it spread like wildfire over western Europe. Known as the French plague, it took its toll of thousands of lives. Second, they brought back with them the certain knowledge that there was a great body of land to the westward which could be reached with none of the perils described by medieval geographers. Such were the chief contributions of Columbus. We shall be concerned with the latter and especially with its ramification which finally resulted in the discovery and opening up of the valley of the Illinois River.

Within fifty years after the return of Columbus, the Spaniards had conquered and colonized most of the islands of the Caribbean and in the West Indies. Pizarro had conquered Peru and Cortes, Mexico. Both had sent home large quantities of gold and precious stones. The rivers and coasts of both Americas had been explored by intrepid sailors looking for a strait leading to the East Indies. Magellan found one and led a Spanish expedition to it. Ponce de Leon landed in and explored Florida and parts of the Gulf coast. De Soto, with an expedition of 420 men and a number of women, Indians, pigs and horses, beat his way through thou-

sands of miles of trackless forests and marshy wastes, fought innumerable hostile Indian tribes, discovered the Mississippi and was buried in it. His small army returned to Mexico City, minus half of their number, after spending over four years wandering through parts of the present states of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Louisiana and Texas. Narvaéz had started out with an army of 300 men to explore the coasts of the Gulf of Mexico. Eight years later, three men, the sole survivors, found their way back to Mexico City after having wandered from the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of California. Coronado was dispatched from Mexico City to discover and conquer the seven mysterious cities to the north, which, according to report, were paved with gold. He discovered a number of dirty Indian pueblos, California, the Grand Canyon, and penetrated as far as the plains of western Kansas before he turned back.

This represents the limit of Spanish exploration in North America. That they did not go farther up the Mississippi Valley and that they did not discover the Illinois Valley can probably be explained best on the ground that they were satisfied that there was no gold in this region. In Mexico and Central and South America they had a rich and ample arena for colonization, settlement and exploitation.

By the year 1600 there were over 200 Spanish towns and cities located in the new world, containing some 160,000 Spanish landlords, farmers, miners, traders and soldiers. An Indian population of 5,000,000 had been subjugated and were living as civilized men and were, at least nominally, Christians. Each town of any size had its well-built public buildings, churches, schools, and hospitals. Mexico City, with a population of 15,000 Spaniards and 150,000 Indians besides its other public buildings had a boys' and girls' high school, a university, and four hospitals, one of which was for Indians.

Compare the English settlement of the new world. During the years 1497 and 1498, John Cabot, another Italian, sailing under the colors of England, is supposed to have discovered the shores of North America from Newfoundland to the latitude of South America. Frugal King Henry VII rewarded him very parsimoniously indeed, if we may judge from an entry among the privy-purse accounts for August 10, 1497: "To hym that found the New Isle, £10." The smallness of this gift, compared with the extravagant rewards and outlays afforded Portuguese and Spanish explorers of the same period, adequately reflects the interest displayed by England in the new world for the next hundred years. England was not ready for colonization or exploration. Continental and domestic politics and problems were too alluring. Henry VIII, his wives, his break with Rome, wars with France, "Bloody" Mary and the Catholic Restoration, Elizabeth, the return of Protestantism, and the threat of the Spanish Armada were quite sufficient to keep the Englishman exclusively inter-

ested in his own bailiwick. Apart from the glamorous adventures of a few pirates, the English connections with the new world for a hundred years after its discovery fade away into the obscurity of unrecorded fishing voyages.

In 1607, while Spanish civilization in America was just beginning its second glorious century, Englishmen, at Jamestown, in Virginia were planting their first permanent settlement in the western hemisphere. A few years later a brave little band of religious fanatics established another English colony on Massachusetts Bay, first at Plymouth and later at Boston. In time, the Englishmen drove out the aboriginal inhabitants and settled in a belt of the Atlantic seaboard scarcely wider than a good day's march. Back of this English shore lay the forbidding barrier of the Appalachian and Alleghany Mountains. The dense forests on their eastern slopes, the difficulties of portaging around numerous falls in the rivers which penetrated the hinterland, the savagery of the inhabitants who lurked in abutting jungles, all combined to discourage inquiry beyond that territory actually necessary for settlement. Then, too, the Englishman had come to make himself a home. Trading with the Indians, converting them, and the establishment of a colonial empire were subordinate interests. The Englishman pushed westward only as pressed by the actual necessity of the growth of population. So it was that the exploration of the Mississippi Valley and the consequent discovery of the valley of the Illinois was left to a race, perhaps more adventurous, certainly more favorably located for such a task.

THE FRENCH COME TO AMERICA

In 1524, still another Italian, Giovanni Verrazano, led the first French expedition into the western hemisphere. Touching near the latitude of New York City, he carried the *fleur de lis* as far north as Newfoundland before he returned to France without having discovered the elusive strait to the Indies. It is to be remarked that three Italians—Columbus, Cabot, and Verrazano—had now shown the way to the new world to three North-European nations who were destined to conquer and settle it. Geography plays a larger part in the shaping of history than we are sometimes disposed to give it. Italy, possessing the most alert and skilled navigators of the day, never got a foothold in the Americas, possibly because its horizon was bounded by the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Spain, England, and France, however, had a horizon which extended indefinitely to the west. Each reached out for a piece of it, albeit the hand that reached was a hired one.

Unhappily, while Verrazano was engaged in establishing France's

claim in the new world, his master, Francis I, King of France, envious of his neighbor, Charles V of Spain, had invaded that monarch's domain in Italy. Suffering a crushing defeat at Pavia, Francis was a prisoner at the time of Verrazano's return. This, quite naturally, diverted the budding interest of France in the new world and crippled French enterprise in the western hemisphere for the time being.

Ten years later a change of fortune allowed Francis to send out the famous expedition of Jacques Cartier, who has since become popularly known as the discoverer of Canada. Cartier made several voyages over a period of seven years. He discovered and explored the Bay of St. Lawrence, and the St. Lawrence River as far as the present site of Montreal. He attempted to establish a colony of settlers recruited largely from the jails of France. The severity of the Canadian winter; the character of the colonists, the savagery of the natives; disease; dissension between Cartier and other leaders of the expedition; and general lack of preparation and co-ordination for such an arduous enterprise, all contributed to make the venture an ignominious failure. After one winter in Canada, the survivors returned to France, leaving the foundation of New France to a later age and a greater man than Cartier.

While the Spanish were busy establishing their empire in the south, the French matched the English in concentrating upon domestic affairs and in losing interest in America. It is nearly a hundred years after Verrazano and Cartier before the French pick up the thread of their first discoveries. When they did so, they put at the head of their venture a man superbly fitted for the task.

Samuel de Champlain issued from a middle class family dwelling in a small fishing village on the Bay of Biscay. He grew to young manhood at a period when the religious wars were gnawing at the vitals of all western Europe. Before he was thirty, he had spent ten years in one of the armies engaged in that internecine strife between Catholic and Protestant which came close to making a bloody wilderness of the whole Christian world. When Henry of Navarre renounced Protestantism for the crown and put an end to the feud in France, Champlain was left free to exercise his native curiosity about the sea. He joined a Spanish expedition to the West Indies and eventually became a captain in the Spanish service. Returning from these adventures, he wrote a book describing them which brought him some little public recognition. Finally, he managed to get Henry interested in extending France's influence in America. As a result, he was commissioned to establish a colony in New France. In 1608, almost coincidentally with the founding of the English colony at Jamestown, Champlain guided his colonists down the St. Lawrence to the rock of Quebec where was reared the first permanent French settlement in the western hemisphere.



(Courtesy of the Finley Collection, Knox College, Galesburg)
THE AMERICAN BISON AS DRAWN BY HENNEPIN IN "NEW DISCOVERY,"
LONDON, 1698

Despite Champlain's ambition to establish in Canada a new home for Frenchmen, Quebec remained for some time little more than an outpost of the fur trade. Twenty years after the founding of Quebec, the French population of Canada numbered but a hundred souls. Most of these were traders. To the average Frenchman, Canada was but "a tract of snow; a land of barbarians, bears, and beavers." As a matter of fact, the situation in Canada was not one likely to attract permanent settlers. Long, cold winters discouraged persons who were familiar with the more temperate weather of France. The climate and nature of the soil was not especially favorable to the growth of crops. General repute had it that the country was in its nature unhealthy. This was due to the havoc wreaked by scurvy and dysentery among the early settlements; the exact nature and cause of which diseases had not as yet been determined. The Indians vacillated between hostility and a crafty, uncertain friendship. It is no wonder that New France was populated largely by those who depended for their livelihood upon the fur trade. Nor is it strange that the population of New France was never to approach in size that of English or Spanish America where conditions were more favorable to permanent settlement.

Notwithstanding their relative inferiority in numbers, the French exhibited a curiosity, courage, persistence, and patience in the exploration of the interior of the continent which was never duplicated by their neighbors. Champlain called in four Recollet monks. In a short time, with others of their order, they had established missions all the way from Nova Scotia to Lake Huron. Champlain, obsessed with the desire to find a short cut to the Pacific Ocean and the East Indies, contributed much to the early knowledge of the interior of North America. With a few Indian guides and several French boatmen, he explored the length of the St. Lawrence River, and discovered the lake which now bears his name. So far as is known he was the first white man to set eyes upon Lake Huron. Hearing reports that the Indians in Wisconsin received frequent visits from a people without hair or beard who came from the West to trade, and doubting not that these strangers were Chinese or Japanese, Champlain dispatched Jean Nicollet to visit them. Bearing with him a robe of Chinese damask embroidered with birds and flowers, he was prepared to meet the representatives of the Grand Kahn of Cathay should he chance across any of them among the savages. Nicollet beat his way over a thousand miles of trackless wilderness, along lonely, unexplored rivers, across the stormy breast of Lake Huron, through the straits of Mackinac, and down the shore of Lake Michigan into Green Bay. He negotiated peace with hostile Indians and was regaled by the chiefs and warriors at a banquet at which 120 beavers were devoured at a single sitting. He ascended the Fox River and crossed the portage to the headwaters of the Wisconsin, a tributary of the great Mississippi, the siren

stream which was to lure his countrymen into the discovery of an El Dorado richer in potentialities than any region the world had yet known. On his return in 1638, he reported that he had descended the Wisconsin so far that in three days more he would have reached the sea. He probably had mistaken the meaning of his Indian guides. The "great water" to which he was so near was not the sea, but the Mississippi. Nevertheless, his report did nothing to quiet the adventurous ardor of his compatriots who still were hoping to find a short cut across the continent to the spices and silks of the Far East.

Champlain died in 1635. The story of the matchless bravery with which he faced the perils of uncharted seas, rivers, and lakes, and of hostile Indians can not be told here. Neither can we give an adequate picture of the everyday obstacles which he had to surmount; dissension among his followers which went so far as an attempt to murder him; hardship, privation, and starvation which time and time again threatened to wipe out his small colony; vacillating support from France; and capture of Quebec by English privateers. We cannot show his courage and persistence, nor the unselfishness and tact with which he pursued his task. He was a scholar as well as a soldier, explorer, and gracious gentleman.

The period between 1635, the year of Champlain's death, and 1672, the year when Frontenac, the next great figure on the Canadian scene, was appointed governor is one which does not bear very heavily upon the business of the discovery of the Illinois Valley. The French population of Canada grew to approximately 7,000. Montreal was founded farther up the St. Lawrence than Quebec and, prospering on the fur trade, gained the dimensions of a town. Several villages were established along the river. Several boatloads of women were shipped over from France to furnish wives for the soldiers and voyagers who had decided to remain in Canada. A few indecisive skirmishes were fought with the Iroquois, the scourge of northeastern America. Starting as the possession of a trading company, during this period, Canada rose to the dignity of a royal province. A strong central government was established which was responsible only to the King of France. A seigniorial system of land tenures was established. Land was cleared and industries started. Not much was done in the way of further exploration, except perhaps the unrecorded wandering of a few fur traders. Canada was building itself up internally and was, perhaps unconsciously, preparing itself to become the base and starting point for one of the most remarkable series of explorations in the history of the world.

WHY THE FRENCH CAME WEST

There are several reasons why it fell to the lot of the French to explore the Illinois and Mississippi valleys. These reasons may be classed generally as geographic, economic, and emotional or sentimental.

Consider first, the geographic situation of New France. Spain had planted itself in Mexico, Florida, and along the Gulf. Its only aorta to the Mississippi Valley was the lower Mississippi itself which had been discovered by De Soto. The lower Mississippi was a spectacle and phenomenon but it was also a region of bayous, lagoons, swampy marshes, the shores of which were covered with rank, tropical growth and infested with mosquitoes. It flowed out of an unknown hinterland to the north. It did not invite penetration by the gold-seeking, westward looking Spaniards. In time they might have ascended the river out of mere curiosity, but curiosity must wait if there is gold to be dug.

England planted herself on the eastern slope of a mountain range. It must be remembered that practically all travel in early America was confined to the waterways. There were no roads to the west. Men will not undertake an extended expedition with the new paraphernalia incident to traveling a long distance when their route leads them overland through an uncharted and roadless wilderness of savages, underbrush, brambles, forests, and mountains unless they are driven by some extraordinary incentive. The English had no incentive. They came to establish homes. As long as they could find sufficient room and as long as they could raise crops and keep the savages away, they were satisfied. They had no waterways which invited them to the Mississippi Valley. Their rivers were rapid and short. The portages over the watershed to the Ohio and other rivers flowing to the west were long and difficult. The English might have discovered the Mississippi Valley if they had been given enough time. Eventually the rising tide of immigration would have forced them over the mountains, as it did. As long as they had plenty of room, there was enough to do along their shore to keep them busy.

The French, however, had settled along the St. Lawrence on the great waterway which penetrates to the very heart of America. From the mouth of the St. Lawrence along the St. Lawrence, itself, and over Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, Lake Huron, and Lake Michigan there is a continuous water passage into the middle of the continent. With the exception of a few short portages around rapids and falls, it is navigable the whole way. From Lake Michigan a portage of a mile or so led to one of the branches of the Illinois which afforded an unobstructed avenue to the mouth of the Mississippi, a good thousand miles farther. The French had situated themselves on an open road which invited them on into the Illinois and Mississippi valleys.

Consider now the economic features of the situation which led to the discovery of these regions. In the first place, men have never given up the idea that there is a short way to the East by going west. The Panama Canal is one expression of it. In our own day it is proposed to establish a commercial route to the East by sending submarine liners under the Arctic ice cap. It is not strange that Champlain and his immediate successors should have hoped to find such a route by following the St. Lawrence waterway to its western extremity where they might find a river flowing west which would lead them to the Pacific Ocean. Such a hope was entirely reasonable in the light of the geographical ignorance of the dimensions of North America then prevalent. The French of that day knew nothing of the existence of the Rocky Mountains. They had no conception of the width of the continent. De Soto had crossed a large river to the south over a century before. If the French knew of his discovery, they could not know that it was identical with the great river which the Indians described as running southwest. It seemed eminently reasonable to them that this river might flow into the Gulf of Southern California; that it might be the eastern extremity of the Colorado which Coronado had discovered in his quest for the seven mysterious cities of gold. If their calculations had proved correct, the French would have occupied a most enviable position as the masters of what would undoubtedly have proved a profitable trade route to the East. The hope of discovering such a route was one of the factors which led the French westward into the Mississippi Valley.

Probably the most important economic factor which led to the discovery of the two valleys, however, was the desire of Frenchmen to further enrich themselves from the profitable trade in furs which they had built up in the sixty years since Champlain founded Quebec. This business had already become one of the most important branches of international trade. All of western Europe and even Russia was a market which called for more and more of the American peltries. In that day there was no cotton. Silk was a priceless luxury which could be obtained only at the greatest expense from the far East. The clothes, all the fabrics, of the occident were made of linen or wool. But with the opening up of North America the fur of the beaver was discovered. The long, soft hair made a fine cloth. It became the ordinary material used for men's hats. The pelts themselves made beautiful fur coats and neck pieces. Beaver skins became the staple product of North America, much as cotton is today in the southern states. Fortunes were made and lost on them. Large companies were organized to secure trading monopolies in them. Europe depended on beaver skins much as we, today, depend upon wool for our warm clothes and fabrics. We know how the merchants, mill workers, and spinners of England suffered when the supply of cotton

was cut off during the Civil war. Likewise, whenever there was any diminution of the fur supply, a sizable portion of the population of the seventeenth century Europe would find itself out of work. The furs of North America became an indispensable part of the European cosmos.

The rewards offered by the fur trade had their effect upon the Indians of America. They induced him to become the white man's hunter. He gave up the practice of many of his domestic arts to purchase with furs the commodities of the trader—blankets, kettles, hardware, guns, ornaments, and strong liquor. There developed a quite considerable traffic in furs between the tribes of the far interior and those in contact with the Europeans. Indian wars were fought to secure control of the intra-Indian trade. The Indian battles and massacres of the seventeenth century seem a wanton and, to us, incomprehensible waste of life when we ascribe them merely to the savagery of the aboriginal nature. When we realize, however, that some parts of North America were almost destitute of fur-bearing animals and that other parts abounded in them; and when we discover that many of the Indian battle grounds were located in areas which were also rich in beaver, the Indian seems a good deal closer to civilization than we formerly considered him. It is no abnormality for us to hear, in this advanced age, of a little blood being spilled over a rich oil basin or coal field.

England was quick to covet the rich prize which the fur trade promised. She forced Holland out of New York and established trading relations with the Iroquois in upper New York, diverting a large share of the furs which formerly had gone down the river to Montreal or Quebec. Spurred into action by English competition, the merchants of France and Canada saw clearly that the day was not far distant when the chief source of the fur supply would be the unexplored regions to the west. They realized that exploration and control of that country was essential to French domination of the fur trade.

We have seen that the geographical location favored exploration of the Mississippi and Illinois valleys by the French and that their economic situation demanded it. Though we have classed the other factors which induced the French into that country as sentimental or emotional, they are by no means negligible.

The desire to propagate the gospel to the savage was one of the great forces which led men to explore the middle west. The sixteenth century was a time when religion burned in the breasts of a great number of people with a feverish intensity. In that day the average man could not be interested in politics, literature, art, or music. There were no theaters, radios, newspapers, magazines or other devices which now divert us. Spare time would have hung heavy had not religion offered people an escape from themselves. Religion became a large part of their lives, filling the position occupied today by golf and the moving pictures.

Champlain in the early years of the settlement at Quebec called in four Recollet monks. They erected a convent at Quebec, called in others of their order, and established missions from Nova Scotia to Lake Huron. The Recollets were a reformed and revitalized branch of the Franciscan order founded by St. Francis of Assisi in the early thirteenth century. The Catholics had everything their way in both New France and New Spain. In the early charters granted by both France and Spain there was the provision that Protestants and heretics should not be harbored in the new world. Among the Catholic clergy, however, there was a bitter intra-denominational rivalry.

The Jesuits were the chief rivals of the Recollets in Canada. This order was founded in the early fifteenth century by Ignatius Loyola, a Spanish soldier. In organization and discipline it resembled an army. It required explicit obedience of its members. It was headed by a general appointed by the pope. It fostered among its members an intense pride and loyalty to the order. It was the most zealous and energetic of all the Roman clergy in carrying the gospel to the heathen. It inculcated in its members a battling, evangelical activity which did much to strengthen the position of the Catholic church in the trying years after the Reformation. By the middle of the sixteenth century it was furnishing most of the educators for Catholic Europe.

It is from the Jesuits that we get much of our knowledge of early Canadian history. Each mission was required to send in a yearly account, describing minutely all that had transpired during the year. In these "Jesuit Relations" along with the infinitely tedious accounts of conversions and the exemplary deportment of neophytes, we find records of the discovery of iron, copper, and lead ores; we find interesting data on the tides and currents in the lakes; we find the most reliable accounts of Indian history and tribal arrangements; we find the records of some of the early explorers, many of whom were Jesuit priests sent out to convert the savage.

The Jesuits made their first converts among the Huron Indians who at the time were located in the peninsula between Lake Erie and Lake Huron. Shortly before 1650 the dreaded Iroquois descended upon the Hurons, practically annihilated the whole tribe, and sent the scattered remnants fleeing into the far west. The loyal Jesuit fathers followed their charges into the west and about 1650 established themselves in a mission at the western extremity of Lake Superior. Shortly afterwards they established other missions on Green Bay, just off from Lake Michigan, and on Grand Manitoulin Island in Lake Huron. The story of these courageous pioneers for Christ is one of the thrilling and romantic chapters in the history of the Americas. Casting fear aside, they went

into the wilderness alone. They learned the Indian languages and lived in the squalor and filth of the Indian camps. They taught Christ and the commandments to the savages and were frequently rewarded by being burned at the stake and eaten by their pupils. On the whole, however, they managed to gain the confidence of the Indians among whom they went, which was to prove a valuable asset to the explorers of the Mississippi and Illinois valleys.

The Jesuits were an ambitious order. In two centuries of their existence, the contributions and legacies given them by pious Catholics had made them very wealthy. Along with their work as missionaries they quite frequently carried on a profitable trade in furs as a side line. As their wealth increased, their interests broadened. They became anxious not only to spread the gospel, but also to heighten the prestige of their order. In Paraguay they had built up a Jesuit Empire. Villages of Indians had been gathered around the Jesuit priests. The Indians were taught Christianity and made the virtual subjects of their spiritual guides for the purposes of both war and peace. The Jesuits became the political as well as the spiritual rulers of a whole country. It has been suggested that they aspired to build up the same kind of an Empire among the Indians of North America. At any rate, they were anxious that the country lying west and south of their posts on the Great Lakes should be explored. They were also anxious that the exploration should be under Jesuit supervision, and, as we shall see later, they went to considerable pains to discourage and hinder penetration of that country by the Recollets and by lay explorers.

How great a factor was religion in bringing about the exploration of our two great river valleys will be impressed on us from time to time as we unfold the stories of the various expeditions. Each one carried several priests along with it. And those expeditions were not the sort of pleasure tours for which excess baggage would be carried along merely to make the trip more pleasant or the party more congenial. Each man was along for a vital reason—to show the way, to carry the packs, to paddle the canoes, to hunt for food, to fight the natives, or to introduce them to Christianity.

So much for religion as an inducement to the Illinois Valley. Another sentimental factor which led to its exploration was what we may call the Glory of France. During the reign of Louis XIV, from 1643 to 1715, France was the proudest, most powerful nation of Europe. Louis XIV, one of the most energetic, astute, and resourceful monarchs the world has ever known, through a series of well-conducted wars pushed out the boundaries of France beyond any limit they have ever known with the exception of the brief period under Napoleon. He gathered the wealth, beauty, and wit of Europe around his throne at Versailles. He inherited

the work of Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin who had broken down feudalism in France. Declaring himself his own minister of state, Louis XIV polished off the job and removed France from the bounds of that hideous institution which had checked the development of Europe for a thousand years. Consequently the people of France became nation-minded and patriotic. They began to get ideas about national prosperity. A school of economists grew up which subscribed to the theory that prosperity would be fostered by the development of colonies. The colonies were to supply the mother country with raw material on which the mother country was to have a monopoly. The mother country was to have the exclusive privilege of selling things to the colonies.. Ab-ra-ca-dab-ra and everybody would be rich. The theory did not work very well in practice because it was not a very good theory. It left out of consideration too many essential facts. At any rate, it sounded well, and since prosperity was what France wanted, Louis began to encourage the establishment of colonies. The French got a foothold in India and established a colony and trading center there. A part of the same program was the opening up of Canada and the interior of North America. It was this Glory of France, this desire for national well-being that sent St. Luson to Sault Ste. Marie at the confluence of Lake Superior and Lake Huron in 1671, 180 years after the discovery of America, sixty years after the founding of Quebec. Attracting a large number of Indians to witness the ceremony, he planted a cross and a post to which was attached a shield bearing the royal arms. He drew up his small army of fifteen men in stiffest military array, and raising his sword in one hand and holding a clod of earth in the other, he proclaimed in a loud voice,—

“In the name of the Most High, Mighty, and Redoubted Monarch, Louis, Fourteenth of that name, Most Christian King of France and Navarre, I take possession of this place, Sainte Marie du Sault, as also of Lakes Huron and Superior, the Island of Manitoulin, and all countries, rivers, lakes, and streams contiguous and adjacent thereunto,—both those which have been discovered and those which may be discovered hereafter, in all their length and breadth, bounded on the one side by the seas of the North and of the West, and on the other by the South Sea: declaring to the nations thereof that from this time forth they are vassals of His Majesty, bound to obey his laws and follow his customs; promising them on his part all succor and protection against the incursions and invasions of their enemies; declaring to all other potentates, princes, sovereigns, states, and republics,—to them and to their subjects,—that they cannot and are not to seize or settle upon any parts of the aforesaid countries, save only under the good pleasure of His Most Christian

Majesty, and of him who will govern in his behalf; and this on pain of incurring his resentment and the efforts of his arms. *Vive le Roi.*"

What remains of the sovereignty thus pompously proclaimed? Now and then the accents of France upon the lips of some straggling lumberman or vagabond half-breed, a few peculiar land titles, a colorful background upon which the brush of time has painted drab cities and towns and scientifically operated farms. But it was a formal proclamation that France was going into the empire business on a large scale. France was ready to take over the heart of America. Her geographical situation in Canada had long invited her to do so; religion and patriotism encouraged her to do so.

A drama of adventure, a tragedy, was about to be unfolded to the world. The stage was set. Nicollet had advertised the show with the report of his visit to Wisconsin. St. Lusson had rung up the curtain with his formal proclamation at Sault Ste. Marie. Frontenac, the great governor of Canada, was behind the scenes, ready to see the thing through to its bitter end. The chief actors, the phlegmatic Joliet, the saintly Marquette, the great La Salle, the heroic Tonty, the rascal Hennepin, were ready to enter.

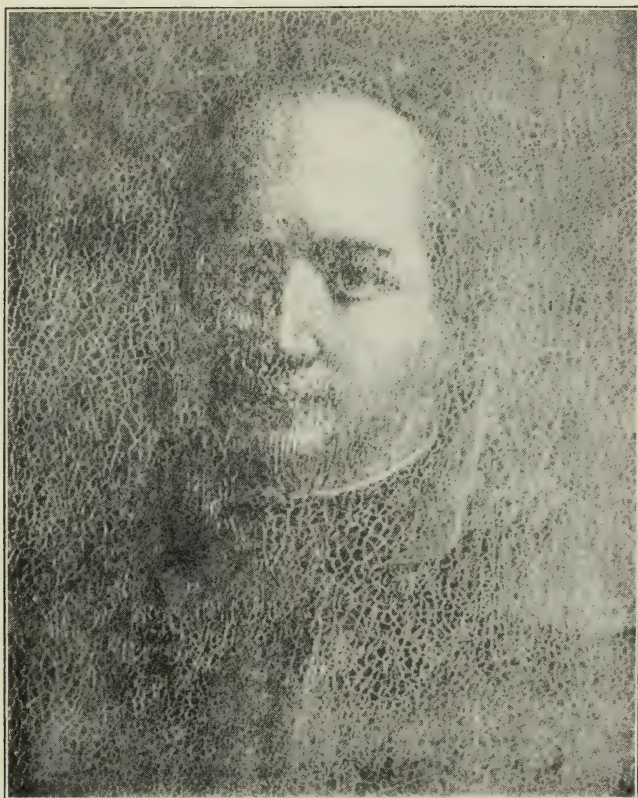
DISCOVERY OF THE ILLINOIS RIVER

It is impossible to say with certainty who was the first white man to come into the Mississippi or Illinois Valley—or when he came. As has been mentioned before, the right to trade in furs at this time was a monopoly granted by the King of France to favored individuals or companies. These fortunate ones usually carried on their trade by letting the Indians bring their furs in to them. Unquestionably, however, there was a good deal of illegitimate trading carried on by private traders who went into the wilderness among the Indians themselves. These men, of course, were outlaws and so, naturally, a good deal of secrecy has shrouded their activities. It is certain, however, that a number of these *couriers du bois*—runners of the woods, as they were called—penetrated the western country before other white men. We have fairly certain evidence that Radisson and Groseilliers, two of them, reached the Mississippi between 1654 and 1663 in search of furs. These men cannot be accorded the laurels of discoverers or explorers because they never acquainted the outside world with their findings. Their findings were of about as much utility to the outside world as those of the Norsemen who certainly knew of America before Columbus. They did serve one purpose, however. They were generally on good terms with the Indians and proved valuable as guides for the legitimate explorers who now come on the scene.

Robert Cavalier de La Salle was born in 1643 at Rouen, France, of a family of wealthy burghers. In his youth he was given the best education then available, probably in a Jesuit school. In his young manhood he became connected with the Jesuits, but shortly left them on good terms. He was a born individualist. By temperament he was not suited to take orders. He must have become restless under the rigorous discipline of his Jesuit superiors. At the age of twenty-three, he emigrated to Canada where he had an older brother in the monastery of St. Sulpice at Montreal. The priests of St. Sulpice gave him a large tract of land at La Chine farther up the river.

La Salle settled at La Chine, which he built up and colonized. In three years he is said to have learned Iroquois and eight other Indian tongues. He became fascinated with the idea of finding a direct westward passage to the Orient. During his stay at La Chine, he learned from a band of Senecas, living south of Lake Erie, of a great river rising in their country and flowing south westwardly to the sea, eight months distant by canoe. According to the geographical views then prevalent, La Salle figured that this river should empty into the Gulf of California. If so, then this river was the long-sought westward passage to China. The explorer in La Salle manifested itself. He secured the Governor's authority to explore the great river called by the Indians, the Ohio, or "peaceful river." He sold his own estate at La Chine to finance the expedition.

In midsummer, 1669, La Salle with twenty-four men and seven canoes embarked on the St. Lawrence for unknown points to the south and west. In the party was Father Galinee, lately arrived from France, a novice in the woods and on the river. Excerpts from his journal follow. The savage grace and artistry of the Indian birch canoes caught his fancy. "If God grants me the grace of returning to France," he says, "I shall try to carry one with me." He describes the accommodations afforded by nature to travelers. "Your lodging is as extraordinary as your vessels; for, after paddling or carrying the canoes all day, you find mother earth ready to receive your wearied body. If the weather is fair, you make a fire and lie down to sleep without further trouble; but if it rains, you must peel bark from the trees, and make a shed by laying it on a frame of sticks. As for your food, it is enough to make you burn all the cookery books that ever were written; for in the woods of Canada one finds means to live well without bread, wine, salt, pepper, or spice. The ordinary food is Indian corn, or Turkey wheat as they call it in France, which is crushed between two stones and boiled, seasoning it with meat or fish, when you can get them. This sort of life seemed so strange



REPUTED PORTRAIT OF MARQUETTE

From an oil portrait by an unknown artist, discovered in
Montreal in 1897

From Thwaites, R. G.: Father Marquette, Appleton &
Co., 1917

to us that we all felt the effect of it; and before we were a hundred leagues from Montreal, not one of us was free from some malady or other. At last, after all our misery, on the second of August, we discovered Lake Ontario, like a great sea with no land beyond it."

La Salle and his party tarried for some time among the Iroquois on the shores of Lake Ontario looking for a guide to the headwaters of the Ohio. He met with considerable difficulty due to the opposition of a Jesuit priest who had established himself among the Iroquois. The Jesuit was jealous of the two priests of the order of St. Sulpice who had been sent along with the party. He saw to it that the party was given no guides and so prejudiced his Iroquois charges against the party, that the Iroquois burned and ate before their eyes an Indian prisoner from the west whom they feared would give the desired assistance.

Pushing his way along the shore of Lake Ontario looking for a guide, La Salle chanced across a party of Frenchmen returning from Lake Superior where they had been sent to discover and explore the copper mines of which the Indians had told them. One of the party was Louis Joliet, of whom we shall hear later. Joliet told of the Indians in the more northern region who were in great need of spiritual succor. Galinee and his fellow priest determined to go to their rescue at once. Having, by this time, found a guide, La Salle split up his party between himself and Galinee and headed southward.

It is unfortunate that Galinee did not leave the northern Indians to the damnation which they probably preferred, and more than likely, achieved, regardless of his good intentions. Had he stayed with the party, we might have known for certain whether La Salle was the discoverer and first explorer of the Illinois River. As it is, La Salle's movements for the next several years are shrouded in doubt. We know for certain that he reached the Ohio and that he proceeded down it some distance. According to one account, which is none too credible, he descended the river as far as the rapids at Louisville, Kentucky. There his men deserted him and he was forced to retrace his steps alone. The next spring, this same account would have him embarking upon Lake Erie, ascending the Detroit to Lake Huron, coasting the unknown shore of Michigan, passing through the Straits of Mackinac, and then descending Lake Michigan to about where Chicago now stands. From here he is said to have crossed to a branch of the Illinois and to have followed it until he reached the Mississippi. He is then reported to have descended the Mississippi to a point at which he could be satisfied that it discharged into the Gulf of Mexico and not into the Gulf of California as he had hoped.

This account which purports to be the record of a conversation with

La Salle, himself, is vague, confused, and in many particulars, such as the description of distances, obviously incorrect. It is significant that after Joliet and Marquette claimed to have discovered the Mississippi, La Salle never publicly asserted his claim to that distinction. Governor Frontenac, La Salle's ardent supporter, made no claim to La Salle's having discovered the Mississippi although he had that project very much at heart. Three years later, Frontenac's letters show that he still believed that the Mississippi flowed into the Gulf of California. After La Salle's death, his brother, his nephew, and his niece petitioned the king for certain grants in consideration of their illustrious relative which they specify in their petition. They do not pretend that he reached the Mississippi or Illinois at this time. Their silence is most significant since the niece had in her possession the papers, since lost, in which La Salle describes his expedition on the Ohio. It is submitted that from the best evidence available, it is fair to conclude that the story that La Salle discovered the Mississippi and Illinois rivers is a myth propounded by a person who was evidently very strongly biased against Marquette and the Jesuits. In the only other papers of interest which have come to light, La Salle, himself, mentions only his travels on the Ohio and some of the northern lakes at this time. If, perchance, he did discover the Illinois and Mississippi on this expedition, he kept his findings so secret that he no more deserves being called their discoverer than do the wandering *courier du bois*, some of whom had probably penetrated as far. As we shall see in another chapter, La Salle was destined to gain fame and glory aplenty. His prestige will not suffer because we reserve for two others the distinction of having discovered the Illinois and Mississippi rivers.

Louis Joliet, the son of an humble Canadian wagon-maker, was born in Quebec in 1645, thirty-seven years after Champlain had founded that city. In his youth he was educated by the Jesuits for the priesthood. Upon reaching manhood, he abandoned that calling to become a fur trader which was more in line with his natural aptitude. He possessed no outstanding points of character. He was an intelligent merchant with a better than ordinary education. He had sufficient boldness, enterprise, and determination for the work which was to perpetuate his name.

Jacques Marquette was born in 1637 of an old and honorable family in Laon, France. Being of an ascetic, religious nature he joined the Jesuits at the age of seventeen. At the age of twenty-nine he was sent to the missions in Canada. Besides being a facile scholar, he was one of the most successful of all the early missionaries in handling and converting the savage. The purity and humility of his own life and his gentleness appealed mightily to the Indians. After a few years of diligent



LOUIS JOLIET

After a bust by William G. La Favor at the main entrance to the
Joliet High School, Joliet

From Gagnon, Ernest: Louis Jolliet, Librairie Beauchemin, Lim-
itie, Montreal, 1913

study, he was able to speak fluently six or seven of the Indian languages. At the time when St. Luson was taking possession of the west for France, Marquette was stationed at the Jesuit mission on the Straits of Mackinac at the head of Lake Michigan.

Frontenac, who became governor of Canada in 1672, was anxious to explore the great river to the west, of which the French had heard ever since the days of Jean Nicollet—the Mississippi—which might flow into the Gulf of California. Who knew? On the advice of his predecessor, he chose Joliet, who had just returned from his expedition to Lake Superior, to do the job. He was to be accompanied by Marquette, the able linguist and tactful ambassador of God.

Joliet and Marquette set out in 1673, with five companions, to unravel the mystery of the great Mississippi. They passed through the Straits of Mackinac, where Marquette had been conducting his mission. Following the route taken by Nicollet forty years before, they coasted down Lake Michigan and into Green Bay. Taking a portage over to the Wisconsin River, they found themselves in the watershed of what they little suspected to be the greatest river system in the world. Bidding farewell to the waters which flowed eastward into the St. Lawrence, they committed themselves to a current which emptied, they knew not where—perhaps, into the Gulf of Mexico,—perhaps, into the Gulf of California. For seven days they paddled their way down the Wisconsin, between wooded bluffs and grassy prairies, brilliant with the verdure of early June. On the seventeenth of June, 1673, they steered their birch-bark canoe into the wide and more rapid current of the Mississippi. There could be no mistaking that it was the river which had so long seduced the French. It was one of the high moments in history. For the first time the French had set their paddles in that mighty water which was patiently to bear their yoke for the next hundred years.

Down the tranquil stream drifted this intrepid antenna of mighty, far-away France; past the mouths of unknown streams; past the green prairies and rolling countryside of Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois; past herds of strange cattle with humps on their shoulders and coarse manes hanging down over their eyes; past a few straggling Indian villages which were visited and which, after the first fright had worn off, proved too friendly for the comfort of European stomachs. Shortly after the voyagers had passed the mouth of the Illinois, they came upon a strange spectacle. "On the flat face of a huge rock were painted, in black, red, and green, a pair of monsters each as large as a calf, with horns like a deer, red eyes, and a beard like a tiger, and a frightful expression of countenance. The face was something like that of a man, the body covered with scales; and the tail so long that it passes entirely around

the body, over the head and between the legs, ending like that of a fish. "This," says Parkman, in his great work on the discovery of the West, "reminded them that the Devil was still lord paramount in this wilderness." In a footnote, Parkman ingeniously remarks that he passed the place in 1867 and that "a part of the rock had been quarried away, and, instead of Marquette's monsters, it bore a huge advertisement of 'Plantation Bitters'." It is, perhaps, a sad commentary—perhaps a happy one,—on the whole history of our country, that a traveler passing the same spot, today, could not be regaled with even this slight reminder of the devil.

Shortly after Marquette and Joliet had passed this remarkable display, they came athwart the boiling, surging, muddy waters of the Missouri where it joins with the Mississippi. Their canoes were tossed about like twigs on an angry sea. "Never," writes Marquette, "have I seen anything more terrific." Escaping this danger, they proceeded on down the river, and a few days later, passed the mouth of the Ohio. The country through which they now were passing began to assume a more tropical aspect. Instead of the rolling prairies and green woods of the north, the banks of the river were covered with a veritable jungle of vines, ferns, underbrush, and moss. Mosquitoes pestered the travelers, by day, and stole their sleep, by night. The party proceeded as far south as the mouth of the Arkansas River. There, satisfied that the Mississippi emptied into the Gulf of Mexico, and fearful lest some mishap should destroy themselves and prevent the news of their discovery from reaching Canada, the two leaders decided to turn back.

All along the route, the party had had to contend with hostile Indians. The difficulties thus raised offered a splendid opportunity for the display of Marquette's tact and talent in handling the savages. His great sincerity, piety, and honesty, not to mention his bravery, served the Frenchmen well on several occasions when the savages seemed to be bent on their destruction. He went among the Indians determined to be their friend and to win them away from Satan. Coming from a distance and being of a strange race, *prima facie* he would appear to the Indians to be an enemy, and they usually received him as such. He invariably won over their affections, and they would send him on most reluctantly. Indeed, one of the major hardships of the expedition was the hospitality of the aborigines which made merciless demands upon the organs of digestion. After Marquette had allayed their first suspicions, they would declare a feast in honor of their guests. Plate after plate of buffalo, dog meat, corn, fish, berries, and fruit was set before the more or less apprehensive Europeans. A whole day would be consumed in eating. Common courtesy would not let the Frenchmen refuse. In fact, the great quantities of



FATHER MARQUETTE AT THE CHICAGO PORTAGE
From the mosaic by H. A. MacNeil

food which his hosts forced him to consume may have had something to do with Marquette's subsequent physical breakdown, from which he never quite recovered.

Fighting their way up the Mississippi against the current, Joliet and Marquette were informed by Indians along the way that the Illinois River afforded a much more convenient avenue to the Great Lakes than the Wisconsin. Taking this advice, they turned into the mouth of the Illinois and made their way up its splendid waters. To the best of our knowledge, today, this was the discovery of the Illinois River and Marquette and Joliet were its discoverers. To Marquette, who had been suffering from an attack of dysentery, and to the others who had been toiling for days under the parching sun and sleeping at night on the unhealthy shore, the Illinois Valley seemed almost a heaven on earth. They speak of it as a "terrestrial paradise in which earth, air, and water, unbidden by labor, contribute most copious supplies for the sustenance of life." They had come into the valley early in August and the scene which they saw all along their route gave new strength to their tired bodies. Prairies, covered with tall grass, profusely sprinkled with wild flowers, studded with clumps of shade trees, spread out beyond the reach of vision. Great quantities and varieties of wild fruit and berries grew on every hand. Wild buffalo and deer grazed on the banks of the river. Water fowl and other birds frequently obscured the whole heavens by their flight. The river swarmed with fish. The abundance and wild independence and beauty of the prairies and woodlands touching the river almost enticed some of the party away from their two leaders. All could understand why the Illinois Valley was the Indian's conception of Elysium.

The party stopped at Kaskaskia, the great village of the Illinois Indians, then located about seven miles below the present city of Ottawa. They were so well treated and were so enthralled by the beauty of the spot that Marquette resolved to return and establish a mission in honor of the Holy Virgin. A band of the Illinois guided the Frenchmen to Lake Michigan. They followed its shores to the Jesuit mission at Green Bay which they reached at the end of September, after an absence of four months, during which they had paddled their canoes a distance of over 2,500 miles. They had solved the riddle of the Mississippi. They had explored over 1,000 miles of it. They had discovered and explored the Illinois Valley for the white race.

Here, in truth, ends the story of the discovery of the Illinois Valley. The account of its further exploration and settlement follows in another chapter. It remains to say only a few words more about the men who discovered it.

Marquette stopped over at Green Bay to repair his shattered health. Joliet proceeded on to Quebec to carry the tale of their exploits to Governor Frontenac. At the rapids in the St. Lawrence, just above Montreal, he met the first real misfortune of the whole voyage. His canoe capsized and he lost two of his men and a box containing the journal which described the whole journey and which had been written on the scene. As a reward for his services, Joliet was given the great island of Anticosti in the mouth of the St. Lawrence. His name is perpetuated by the city of Joliet, Illinois.

Marquette never fully recovered his health. However, after a rest at Green Bay, he set out to establish his mission of the Immaculate Conception at Kaskaskia. He reached the Illinois the next spring and summoned the Indians to a grand council. It took place in a meadow near the present village of Utica. Five hundred chiefs seated themselves in a great ring. Fifteen hundred youths and warriors stood behind them. Behind the young men stood all the women and children of the surrounding villages. Marquette, standing in their midst, showed them four large pictures of the Virgin, told them the mysteries of the Faith, and pleaded with them to adopt it. The response of his audience was encouraging. They begged him to stay with them and continue his preaching. But Marquette was a dying man, and knew it. He set out for the Jesuit station at Mackinac, but it was not permitted that he return to even that outpost of civilization. The rapidly expiring Marquette and his two companions proceeded along the eastern shore of Lake Michigan. They had ascended about halfway up the coast of Michigan when Marquette, feeling that the end was near, ordered his companions to disembark. Bravely he died, murmuring the names of Jesus and Mary, unshaken in the faith for which he had striven so valiantly to redeem the wilderness.

The place which he held in the hearts of the Indians must have been remarkable. A few years later, a party of Ottawas ran across his grave in the wilderness of Michigan. They disinterred his body, cleaned his bones, and a funeral procession of thirty canoes bore them to Mackinac, where, with the solemn ceremony of his church, they were deposited under the floor of the rude chapel. In 1847, a century and a half after the death of the beloved father, a missionary at Two Mountains, above Montreal, wrote down the tradition of the death of Marquette, told to him by an Indian woman born in 1777. The tradition, as it was carried down on the lips of the Indians for 150 years, follows: "The party returning to Mackinac, were forced by a storm to land on the coast of Michigan. Marquette told his men that he would die shortly and directed them to plant a cross over his grave and to ring a bell. The men remained with him for four days and during that time felt no hunger. At the end of

the fourth day, Marquette died. On awakening the next morning, the men found a sack of Indian corn and a quantity of biscuit and bacon, miraculously delivered to them in accordance with a promise made to them by Marquette that they should have enough food to reach Mackinac. Shortly, the waters of a near-by small stream began to rise, and the grave in which the men had just placed the saintly Jesuit became a small island. Later an Indian battle took place near by, between Christians and infidels. The Christian Indians invoked the name of Marquette and, in consequence, gained the victory." This story had been passed down from lip to lip, from generation to generation, without the aid of paper or print. Of such eternal stuff was the discoverer of the Illinois Valley.



(Courtesy of the Finley Collection, Knox College, Galesburg)

PEORIA, 1832
From Drown's Record, 1850

CHAPTER VI

THE GREAT LA SALLE IN ILLINOIS

To Marquette and Joliet we have awarded the distinction of having discovered the Illinois Valley. But La Salle was the man who first saw its immense potentialities. It was he who first perceived that one day it and the Mississippi Valley would be the backbone of the world's richest agricultural empire. And it was his ambition to secure that empire for France.

After his discovery of the Ohio in 1669, there is a mysterious hiatus of several years in our accounts of La Salle. We do not know what occupied his attention during this period. We have the one account, probably spurious, that he was discovering the Illinois and Mississippi rivers. We have the statement of Nicolas Perrot, a famous voyageur, that, in the summer of 1670, he met La Salle and a party of Iroquois hunting on the Ottawa River. We know that Governor Frontenac came to Canada in 1672 and that within a very short time there had grown up a close understanding between the two men. Count Frontenac was bold, enterprising, and had a fierce, irascible pride that would brook no opposition to the governmental policies which he instituted. He came to Canada a ruined man and was not averse to using his position in bettering his fortune. Frontenac could understand the cold reserve and bold schemes of La Salle. They had common prejudices and dislikes, not the least of which was for the Jesuits who were to oppose their projects at every opportunity.

Together the two men conceived the idea that they could turn a pretty penny into their pockets, and at the same time do a service for France in the West, by building a fort upon Lake Ontario. A fort in such a position would check the Iroquois, of whom the residents of Canada lived in perpetual dread. It would intercept the trade which the tribes of the upper lakes had begun to carry on with the English in New York. It would give France a base at the threshold of the West from which La Salle's dreams of a middle-western empire might materialize. It would also be of considerable profit to those in control of it since they would be in a position to levy tribute on a large share of the furs which came out of North America. The governor fully understood all the advantages of a fort so located, and we can be fairly certain that he meant

to have a slice of the melon when it was cut. Naturally, those Canadian merchants who were not on the inside of the scheme opposed such a project with all their might. It meant ruin for some, since most of the furs which normally had come down to Montreal and Quebec would now be bought by those in charge of the fort. Frontenac could not be sure that the crown of France would support such a move. It would disturb monopolies already granted and would be an added expense to a plaything which had never yet paid its own way. Therefore, Frontenac thought it expedient to cover up his plans with a bit of "address," as he called it.

He sent La Salle ahead to pick out a likely site for the fort. He gave out that he intended to make a tour through the upper parts of the colony with an armed escort, in order to inspire the Indians with respect, and secure a solid peace. He ordered the inhabitants of Quebec, Montreal, Three Rivers, and other settlements to equip and furnish him, at their own cost, with a number of armed men and canoes. He sent word to the Iroquois to meet him at the mouth of the River Cataraqui, where Kingston now stands and where the proposed fort was to be built. As soon as the spring sowing was over, he proceeded at his leisure up the St. Lawrence, gathering his small army as he went. Every device to hinder him was used by the Jesuits and by the merchants who suspected the object of his expedition. At Montreal, a rumor was set on foot that a Dutch fleet had captured Boston and was on its way to attack Quebec. Undismayed by such trickery, Frontenac kept on up the St. Lawrence. By this time he had assembled an army of 400 men, 120 canoes, and two flatboats. At length, on the 12th of July, 1673, they beheld the glistening bosom of Lake Ontario.

The Iroquois had gathered in great numbers at the rendezvous appointed by Frontenac. From the first, both Frontenac and La Salle had shown an unusual faculty for handling the Indians. The Indians admired a keen, incisive spirit in a man. Both La Salle and Frontenac had it. They would work for either as they would work for no one else. And they would listen to either as they would listen to no one else. When Frontenac boldly addressed them as "children," they were delighted. Coming from some one less virulent, they might have been insulted. Frontenac made a great display with his little army. On the day of the grand council, he drew up his soldiers at attention in a double line which extended from his tent to the Indian camp. Through this lane advanced the Indian deputies. They could not restrain their ejaculations of astonishment at the resplendent uniforms of the governor's guard. They were seated in a great circle around Frontenac and listened with respect as he addressed them.

During the several days the council was in session, Frontenac's engineer had traced the lines of the proposed fort. The whole army, under



ROBERT CAVALIER DE LA SALLE
From a portrait

the direction of its officers, was set to work on it. Some dug trenches. Some cut trees. Some hewed and placed the palisades. The work proceeded with such order and alacrity that the Indians were lost in astonishment. Inside of a week, Frontenac had completed an almost impregnable fort. Shortly afterwards, he departed for Quebec, leaving behind a garrison sufficient to keep the surrounding Indians subdued. Though the new establishment was of very questionable commercial benefit to the colony as a whole, it was an inestimable advantage to its physical security, and to La Salle's plans for the future.

LA SALLE LOOKS TO THE WEST

It is hard to say just what La Salle's plans for the future were. His enemies would have us believe that he proposed to open up an Indian empire in the center of North America, at the expense of France, and for his own personal benefit. They would have us think that he risked his life a thousand times, that he underwent a thousand hardships, for the sake of building up his private fortune. Perhaps they were partially right. It is certain that La Salle hoped that his venture would pay for itself. It is natural that he should not have wanted to die in the poor house. But, that pecuniary gain was his sole motive is ridiculous. La Salle thought and planned on a scale too grand to be purely selfish. But, in addition to being a dreamer, he was proud and close-mouthed. Experience had taught him that his enemies would misconstrue or warp the meaning of anything he proposed. As a consequence, it is not likely that he ever disclosed more of his plans than was absolutely necessary.

Our best guess, founded on La Salle's own statements and activities, is that at the time of his discovery of the Ohio, he was still dreaming of a westward route to the Orient. The discovery of the Mississippi by Joliet and Marquette, and that its drainage system emptied into the Gulf of Mexico, immediately relegated such a dream to limbo. La Salle had an ideal temperament for an explorer. Persistent, egoistic, restless, he was soon dreaming a grander dream. He realized that climatic conditions would prevent France from ever establishing a strong colonial empire on the banks of the St. Lawrence. He, himself, had discovered and explored the Ohio Valley. Now he began to hear tales of the wondrous fertility and abundance of the Mississippi and Illinois regions. He began to perceive that this immense valley would one day be the backbone, the granary of the continent. Soon he became resolved to open up and secure the region for France, himself. So far as he knew, it had everything that Canada lacked—fertility, a temperate climate, and, down the Mississippi, an outlet to the sea that was open the year around. His ambition was to lead France into that country, to explore it thor-

oughly, to follow the Mississippi to its mouth, to build a line of forts from the St. Lawrence to the mouth of the Mississippi, and then to populate the whole region with French colonists and domesticated Indians.

The first step in La Salle's program was the building of his fort on Lake Ontario which was now called Fort Frontenac. His next step was to equip the fort so that it might serve as a base for his proposed explorations farther west. With this in view, La Salle sailed for France in 1674. Being afforded a gracious reception at court, he made two petitions to the king: first, for a patent of nobility in consideration of his services as an explorer; the second, for a grant of Fort Frontenac. In return, he agreed to repay what it had cost the king; to maintain a garrison in it equal in size to that of Montreal; to settle a French colony around it; to build them a church; and, to form a settlement of friendly Indians in the neighborhood. Both petitions were granted. La Salle borrowed money from friends and relatives in France with which to repay the king and carry out his end of the bargain. He returned to Canada in a position to control the largest part of the Canadian fur trade and to build himself a fortune.

La Salle immediately formed a secret partnership with Governor Frontenac with whom he shared the profits of the immense trade which was carried on at the fort. "If he had preferred gain to glory," says a friend of La Salle, "he had only to stay at his fort, where he was making more than 25,000 livres a year."

Shortly after his return from France, La Salle repaired to Fort Frontenac where he was virtually an autocrat in a little empire a week distant from the nearest habitation. For three years La Salle remained in his forest stronghold, building it up, populating it, carrying on a profitable trade with the Indians, shaping his plans for the explorations to come, and growing restless.

In 1677, feeling that the time was ripe for beginning the work about which he had so long dreamed, La Salle sailed for France a second time. Again, being affably received at court, he laid his plans before the minister, Colbert. He described the country he had seen south and west of the Great Lakes. He depicted its fertility and beauty—"so free from forests, and so full of meadows, brooks, and rivers; so abounding in fish, game, and venison, that one can find there in plenty, and with little trouble, all that is necessary for the support of flourishing colonies." He pictured the western Indians "who are in the main of a social and tractable disposition; and as they have the use neither of our weapons nor our goods, and are not in intercourse with other Europeans, they will readily adapt themselves to us and imitate our way of life as soon as they taste the advantages of our friendship and the commodities which we bring



(Courtesy of the Finley Collection, Knox College, Galesburg)

HENNEPIN'S MAP ACCOMPANYING HIS LONDON EDITION OF 1699

them. These countries will infallibly furnish, within a few years, a great many new subjects to the Church and the King."

La Salle went on to declare that the English coveted this western country, and would gladly seize it for themselves, "but this last reason only animates the Sieur de la Salle the more, and impels him to anticipate them by the promptness of his action." He said that this was the reason he asked for the grant of Fort Frontenac and described what he had done at that post. He stated that he was ready to plant a colony on Lake Erie and that prompt action was essential to prevent the English from taking possession of it. He asked permission to establish at his own cost other posts with seigniorial rights over all lands which he may discover and colonize within twenty years, and the government of all the country in question.

La Salle was granted most of the things he asked. He immediately set about to hire ship carpenters and to procure enough iron for the building of two ships—one on Lake Erie, with which to dominate the upper Great Lakes, the other on some branch of the Mississippi, with which to control the river valley. He had little difficulty in raising sufficient capital, although on one loan of 1,100 livres he was compelled to pay interest at forty per cent a year.

In July of 1678, La Salle, with thirty volunteers, set sail for Canada. One of the thirty was Henri de Tonti, whom La Salle had engaged to be second in command of his expedition. Tonti was an Italian who had spent much of his life in France, and was the son of an eminent financier of the same name who invented the form of life insurance still known as the Tontine. In his youth, Tonti, the son, had fought in the Sicilian wars and had had his hand blown off by a grenade. In its place he wore a hand of some sort of metal which he could use to good advantage in bringing a drunken boatman or guide to his senses. He became known among the Indians as Tonti-of-the-Iron-Hand. As we shall see later, he contributed much to the haze of chivalry which attends the French occupation of the Illinois Valley.

After a voyage of two months, La Salle's party arrived at Quebec. In due course they repaired to Fort Frontenac. By this time the party had been augmented by the arrival of Father Louis Hennepin, one of the Recollet friars who had been delegated to accompany them. His whole force being collected, La Salle decided to proceed at once, notwithstanding that the blight of a Canadian winter was upon him.

In the late fall of 1678, La Salle dispatched fifteen of his men in canoes laden with merchandise to the value of about 8,000 livres to trade with the Indians around the lakes. The object of this expedition was to initiate friendly relations with the Indians along his proposed route and to collect the supplies of food and other things necessary to the

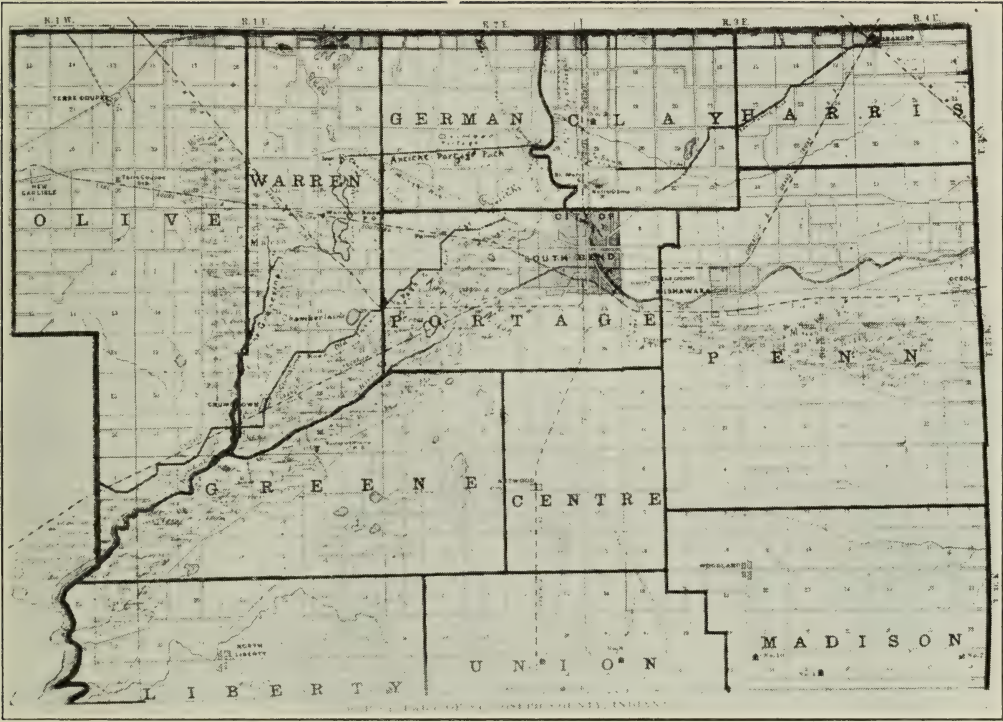
advancement of his venture. The traders had orders to await La Salle in the country of the Illinois Indians around the lower end of Lake Michigan.

Around the first of January, 1679, La Salle sent one of his lieutenants, La Motte, the friar, Hennepin, the carpenters and blacksmiths, and a few soldiers to the eastern end of Lake Erie for the purpose of building a fort and a ship. This was to be the second of his chain of forts from the St. Lawrence through the heart of the continent to the mouth of the Mississippi. The ship was to be the one with which he intended to control the upper Great Lakes.

A few weeks later, La Salle and Tonti followed with the rest of the company. Their conveyance across Lake Ontario was a small ship of twenty tons which La Salle had built at Fort Frontenac. Arriving at Niagara where La Salle expected to find his ship and fort well under way, they found instead that not a timber had been hewn or a nail driven. The hostility of the neighboring Iroquois, who saw the strategic advantages of a fort at Niagara as well as did La Salle, had completely nonplussed the rather dull and untrustworthy La Motte, who had spent the whole time in unsuccessful attempts to persuade the crafty Indians to permit him to proceed. La Salle had better luck with them and shortly the foundations for two fortified block houses were under way. A site for a shipyard was chosen on the Niagara River a few miles above the falls. Under La Salle's direction, the keel of his ship was soon laid, and the carpenters and blacksmiths put to work on it.

LA SALLE'S FIGHT AGAINST ODDS

Now began a series of calamities such as would have tried the patience of a Job, and which dogged the footsteps of La Salle continuously from this time on until his death seven years later. While he was busy laying out the foundations of his forts on the Niagara, the ship which had brought him across Lake Ontario was sunk, either by the negligence or the cupidity of its pilot, whom La Salle suspected to be under the influence of the Jesuits. On board the ship had been anchors and rigging and supplies which were essential to the realization of La Salle's plans. Little was saved but the anchors and cables destined for the new ship. On top of this, the near-by Iroquois were becoming more troublesome. One, feigning drunkenness, almost killed his blacksmith. La Salle was warned, in time, that they were planning to burn his new ship while it was yet in the stocks. He knew that his enemies, the Jesuits, and the envious merchants of Canada, were tampering with his men, who were a crude, untrustworthy lot to begin with. The one man he could trust, Tonti, was poisoned, and only a quick resort to a specific which was carried for that purpose saved his life. In the face of all this, La Salle returned to



MAP SHOWING EARLY PORTAGE FROM THE ST. JOSEPH RIVER TO THE ILLINOIS RIVER USED BY LA SALLE

Canada to replace the supplies lost in the shipwreck. Arriving there, he found that his enemies had spread such wild stories of disaster that his creditors had become alarmed and attached every bit of property he owned. All that winter and the spring of 1679, while his ship was building at Niagara under the direction of Tonti, La Salle was busy patching up his affairs in Canada.

During the absence of La Salle, Tonti finished the vessel. Along about the middle of spring, she was ready for launching. She was christened the *Griffin* in honor of Governor Frontenac whose armorial bearings were embellished with such a monster. The assembled company sang "Te Deum;" cannon were fired; Indians and Frenchmen, warmed by a generous gift of brandy, yelled and shouted as she glided down the ways into the waters of the River Niagara. She was a proud little brig of forty tons, carrying five small cannon. The Indians gaped in amazement at what seemed to them a veritable floating fort. Tonti anchored her in the middle of the stream away from the dangers of Indian attack, finished her equipment, and awaited the return of La Salle.

At length, about the middle of July, La Salle returned to Niagara. He brought with him two Recollet friars, Zenobe Membre and Gabriel Riourde, who, with Hennepin, were to handle the spiritual aspect of the expedition. On the 22nd of July, La Salle dispatched Tonti and five men with orders to proceed to Detroit and await the arrival of the *Griffin*. La Salle expected that Tonti would meet the twelve traders whom he had sent out the previous fall.

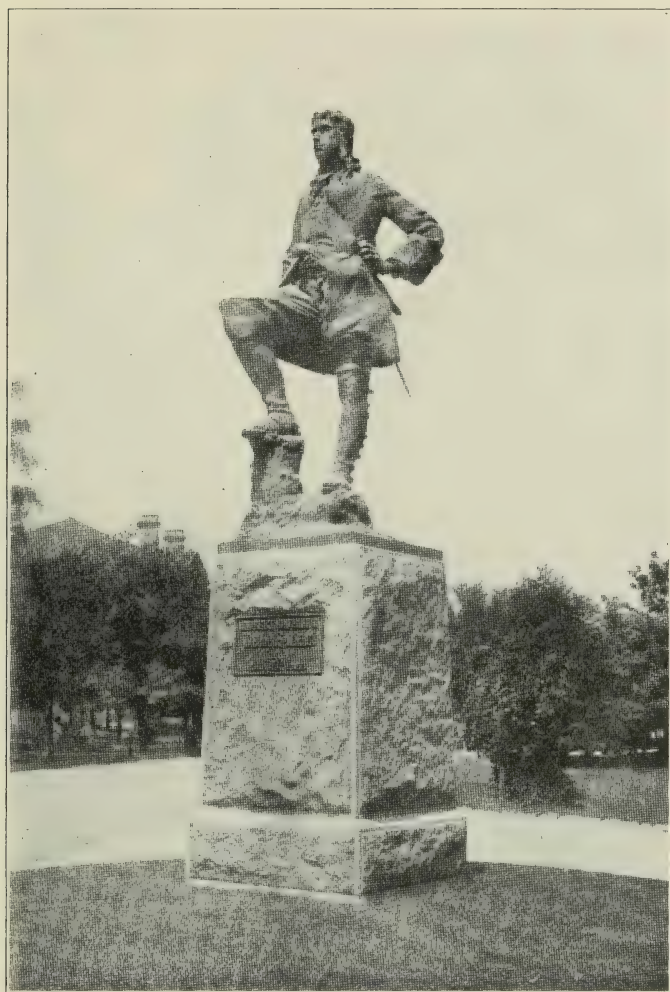
La Salle stayed behind and supervised the towing of the *Griffin* against the strong current of the Niagara River up to the outlet of Lake Erie. Arriving there on the 7th of August, 1679, he with his followers embarked. Twenty days later he arrived at the Mission of St. Ignace on the Straits of Mackinac where Lake Michigan joins Lake Huron. At this beautiful spot the Jesuits had erected a mission because it was a crossroad for Indian travel. Here, too, a number of French traders had located and carried on their sharp dealing with the natives. Both of the groups, dependent as they were on exploiting the savages, feared and hated La Salle for the reason that he might easily do the same thing and run them both out of business. For the moment, however, animosities were buried. The local traders and priests joined with La Salle's company in kneeling before the altar in the little bark chapel of the Ottawa village just outside the mission. Together they heard Mass and praised God for, so far, having blessed their venture with a middling amount of success.

At St. Ignace, La Salle found four of the traders he had sent out the previous fall. He discovered that most of them had been seduced from him, squandering the goods entrusted to them or trading with them on

their own accounts. He arrested the four at St. Ignace and sent Tonti to the Falls of Ste. Marie where two others were captured with their plunder. La Salle was convinced that he had again caught his enemies at their insidious business of thwarting his project. The treacherous traders he forgave. They had been led to believe that the enterprise on which they had been sent was the mere raving of a disordered mind and had already ended disastrously. Poor stuff that they were, La Salle needed men to paddle his canoes and to carry the tools and materials for the ship he proposed to build on the Mississippi. Now he thought he detected a plot to incite the Iroquois against the Illinois in order to defeat his plans by involving him in an Indian war. A lesser man might not have had the courage to tempt adversity again. La Salle was too proud to be defeated.

Tonti was still at Ste. Marie. La Salle left orders for him to follow, and early in September, turned the prow of his vessel into the waters of Lake Michigan. Following the north and western shores of the lake, he arrived a few days later at Green Bay. Here he found several of his advance party who had remained faithful and had collected a large quantity of furs. It will be remembered that, at this time, La Salle was desperately pressed for money. He resolved to load the *Griffin* with furs which had been collected and send them back to Niagara to appease his creditors. It was rather a rash resolution, as it involved trusting the pilot who had, on several occasions, already demonstrated that he was not in sympathy with La Salle's interests. However, there was no escape. La Salle's immediate presence in the region of the Illinois was imperatively required because of the danger of an Iroquois invasion. Accordingly, the *Griffin* was loaded and dispatched with orders to deliver its cargo at Niagara, collect supplies, and to rejoin the party at the head of Lake Michigan. La Salle loaded the tools, forge, supplies, and arms into four canoes and continued his voyage down the lake.

Their journey down the lake was no picnic. They were pitched about on the stormy lake from morning till night. They were drenched to the skin by incessant rains. They ran out of food, and for days the men would paddle all day on no other sustenance than a handful of Indian corn. They became sick from the wild berries with which they stuffed themselves for want of better food. They had to keep a constant vigil against marauding Indians. As they drew near the Illinois shore, game grew more plentiful. The adventurers discovered wild grapes in abundance. They met friendly Indians who accommodated them with a huge feast. The party proceeded down the western shore of the lake, and along the southern shore until they came to the mouth of the St. Joseph River which was the rendezvous appointed with Tonti and with the *Griffin*. La Salle was chagrined to find neither party awaiting him.



LA SALLE
From a statue in Lincoln Park, Chicago

INTO THE COUNTRY OF THE ILLINOIS

Here at the mouth of the St. Joseph, La Salle set his men to work on the third of his proposed chain of forts, and waited for Tonti and the *Griffin* to arrive. After twenty days, Tonti appeared, minus two of his men who had deserted, and minus a number of guns and provisions which had been lost when his canoe was overturned in the surf. And still there was no sign of the *Griffin*. Time enough had passed for her voyage to Niagara and return. A dark foreboding as to her fate began to gather in the mind of La Salle. Besides her valuable cargo of furs, she contained most of the tools and supplies on which La Salle depended. She contained most of the materials for the ship which La Salle purposed to build for his voyage down the Mississippi. Her loss would be irreparable, and would necessitate starting over again from the beginning. But La Salle could wait no longer. He planned to spend the winter in the country of the Illinois. Already the weedy edges of the river and lake were glassed with a thin coating of ice. La Salle dispatched two men to follow the shores of the lake and to meet the *Griffin*, if she were still afloat, and guide her to his new fort, which he called Fort Miami.

Leaving a few behind to hold the fort, on the 3rd of December, 1679, he shepherded his men into their canoes and started the ascent of the chilly St. Joseph. Up the winding river they paddled past the wintry Indiana shores. As they approached the site of the present city of South Bend, they began to look for the portage over to the headwaters of the Kankakee which was to lead them to the Illinois River. La Salle landed to search for it while the rest of the party continued up the river. Hours passed and there was no sign of him. Tonti became uneasy and ordered the men to disembark and bivouac. It was not until late in the afternoon of the next day that they saw him again. The thickly falling snow had caused him to miss his way in the labyrinth of the surrounding forest. He had been forced to make a wide circuit of the swamp which he had found in his way. Thus, he had wandered most of the preceding afternoon and far into the night. Finally, he saw a campfire in the distance and, thinking that he had found his party, he fired a shot as a signal that he was safe. On arriving at the fire, he found to his surprise that there was no one attending it. Near the fire was a couch of dry grass impressed with the form of a man who had evidently fled on hearing the signal shot fired by La Salle. La Salle called out in several Indian languages and, receiving no answer, he piled a barricade of bushes around the spot, called to the invisible proprietor that he was going to bed, lay down on the stranger's couch, and slept undisturbed until morning.

With the coming of the next day, the portage over to the headwaters of the Kankakee was found. The freight and canoes were loaded on the

shoulders of the men and carried and dragged across the snow-covered, marshy plain that separated the two streams. On the way, La Salle's life was attempted by one of the malcontents among his followers. Fortunately escaping any serious injury, La Salle urged his men on until they came to the stream for which they were looking. At the point at which they found it, it was hardly wide enough to contain their canoes. They made their way down it, however, until at last they turned the prows of their canoes into the wider, more majestic Illinois.

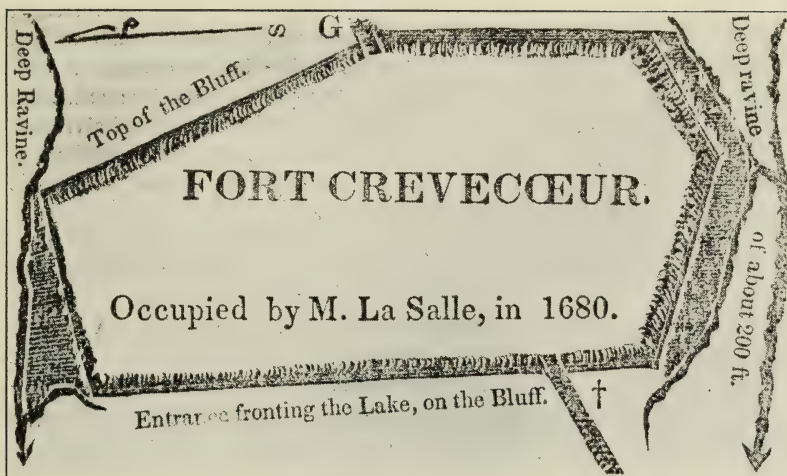
The scene about then began to change. Ranges of high and densely wooded hills, the banks of a prehistoric stream—the former outlet of the Great Lakes—bordered the banks of the river. Shortly, the huge outlines of Starved Rock loomed before them on the south bank. On the north bank, the plain was covered with a vast assemblage of some 460 Indian lodges, each designed to accommodate four or five families. This was the great village of the Illinois tribe which Marquette had sought to convert.

La Salle found the village completely deserted. Not even a dog barked to relieve the monotony of the dread winter desolation. The Indians were absent on their winter hunt. By this time La Salle and his men were desperately in need of food. The pits in which the Indians had stored their corn were found. La Salle removed some fifty bushel to his canoes, intending to make payment later when the owners should be found.

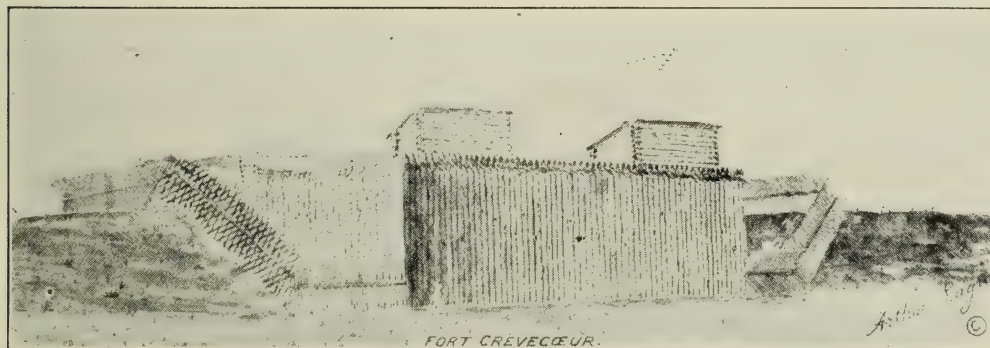
Continuing on down the river, on the 5th of January, the party entered what is now called Peoria Lake. At the far end of the lake they came upon an encampment of Illinois Indians containing some eighty wigwams. Not knowing what sort of reception to expect, La Salle prepared for the worst. He drew up his small flotilla in battle array and bore down upon the startled Indians. The latter not having been given time to prepare for hostilities, chose to receive their visitors peacefully. Both sides professed their friendship. A feast was prepared and after it, La Salle made payment for the corn he had taken and told the Illinois that he wished to build a fort in their midst as a protection against their cruel enemies, the Iroquois.

The savages strenuously objected to such a plan. They wanted no French fort. Despite the manifestation of friendship, for several days the position of Frenchmen in the middle of a savage wilderness was most precarious. Frightened by Indian stories of the dangers ahead, six of La Salle's men, including two of his best carpenters, deserted into the wilderness. La Salle was again poisoned. News came to him that his enemies in Canada were closing in on his property there.

Realizing his utter helplessness while exposed to the semi-hostile Illinois, La Salle began the construction of a small fort on the east side of



(Courtesy of the Finley Collection, Knox College, Galesburg)
From Drown's Record, 1850



(Courtesy of the Illinois Historical Society)
A REPRESENTATION OF THE OLD FRENCH FORT NEAR PEORIA

the river near the present site of Peoria. The fort was no more than an embankment of earth and palisades set upon a small eminence. It contained quarters for his men, a store room, a magazine, and a forge. It was the first permanent, civilized habitation in Illinois. Along with Fort Frontenac on Lake Ontario, Fort Niagara on Lake Erie, Fort Miami on Lake Michigan, it was the fourth of a chain of forts with which La Salle purposed to secure the Middle West and Mississippi Valley for France. It was named Fort Creve Coeur (Broken Heart).

It was under the protection of this fort that La Salle hoped to build the ship on which he purposed to descend the Mississippi and then to sail to France, carrying with him enough furs to pay for the whole venture. The iron and rigging for such a vessel had been in the hold of the *Griffin*. By this time, having heard nothing of the *Griffin* for some six anxious months, La Salle was satisfied that she had floundered or had been scuttled by her treacherous pilot. Of course, this meant that he was bankrupt. But with the remarkable tenacity and patience which has ever since been associated with his name, La Salle decided to return to Canada, set his affairs in order, and bring back the necessary supplies and rigging for the venture down the Mississippi.

Before leaving, however, he dispatched the priest, Hennepin, and two *voyageurs* to explore the Mississippi from the mouth of the Illinois northward. Hennepin and his companions never again returned to Illinois. They were captured by the Sioux in Minnesota, adopted into the tribe, and finally rescued and taken back to Canada, where Hennepin wrote an interesting but fabricated account of his adventures, claiming among other things to have discovered the mouth of the Mississippi.

After Hennepin's departure, La Salle remained at Creve Coeur long enough to see his ship under construction. Leaving the completion of the work under the supervision of Tonti, about the middle of February, La Salle with five men set out for Canada. The winter had been unusually severe. It took them ten days to push, pull and paddle their canoes from Creve Coeur to Starved Rock. One blinding snow storm required a three-day halt. At length they reached Fort Miami where La Salle found the garrison of two men left the previous fall. He sent them down to join Tonti and with his companions plunged into the wilderness of southern Michigan. Wading through swampy marshes, fording icy streams, cutting their way through a trackless forest, plowing through snowdrifts, with La Salle always breaking the way, the small party headed for the straits at Detroit. Eventually, La Salle, having worn out his five companions and left them by the way, arrived at Frontenac on the 21st of April. Lacerated and fatigued from his arduous journey, he did not even pause for rest. He went on to Montreal whence he appeared before his

astounded creditors, satisfied them and secured supplies and equipment for the fort and ship in distant Illinois. He then returned to Frontenac and enlisted twenty-five new men with La Forest as lieutenant to augment the small desertion-riddled force which still remained loyal to him.

In the meantime, the brave Tonti who had been left in command at Creve Coeur was having a distressing time. The men from Fort Miami arrived with this news of the loss of the *Griffin*. Word spread that La Salle was a hopeless bankrupt and would never be able to pay off the men. Shortly after La Salle's departure, Tonti, with three men, had gone up the river to examine the possibilities of fortifying a stony cliff which was called The Rock by French historians and known today as Starved Rock. During their absence the small garrison rebelled. They burned the fort, stole the remaining ammunition and provisions and disappeared into the wilderness. Two of the men remained loyal to Tonti, who now was left in the midst of the half-friendly Illinois with only five men, two of whom were the friars, Membre and Ribourde.

THE ATTACK OF THE IROQUOIS

Gathering up what remained of the tools and supplies at Creve Coeur, Tonti and his companions moved into the great town of the Illinois near The Rock. By this time the Frenchmen had established themselves in the good graces of the Illinois and they were fairly secure in the Indian village of 8,000 people. However, the most terrible scourge of the North American continent, the Iroquois, was about to descend on the Illinois. Having almost completely annihilated the Hurons and Eries to the East, the savage Iroquois, well equipped with fire arms by their good English customers, had secretly been planning a sudden descent on the Illinois and the rich territory which they occupied. The Miamis, in deadly fear of these fierce easterners, had been induced to join in the attack upon their kinsmen and neighbors, the Illinois. With no warning, the Iroquois war band of 500 or 600 suddenly appeared close to the Illinois village. The terrible news spread like wildfire. There was frantic confusion among the Illinois. Finally the women, children, and old men, under the protection of sixty braves, were sent down the river to an island. Most of the Illinois warriors were away hunting. But 400 remained to do battle.

At dawn the Illinois crossed the river and the Iroquois emerged from the woods near by. Both bands were drawn up in howling, jumping, dodging battle array. Tonti saw at once that the Iroquois, with superior numbers and weapons, would be victorious. Presuming upon the treaty of peace between the French and the Iroquois, he volunteered to try to avert hostilities. Advancing with a belt of wampum in his hand, he was



"THE UNFORTUNATE ADVENTURES OF MONS. LA SALLE"
Reproduced from the London, 1698, Edition of Hennepin's New
Discovery

mistaken for an Illinois and received a severe blow in the head from an Iroquois tomahawk. After the wound was staunched, a conference was held. At length, Tonti, succeeding in persuading the invaders that 1,200 Illinois and sixty Frenchmen were being held in reserve, was sent back to the Illinois to make overtures for peace. A hostage sent by the Illinois to their enemies undid Tonti's work by revealing the weakness of the Illinois, whereupon the most terrible carnage ever seen in this state was let loose upon the Illinois. It required all of Tonti's diplomacy and courage to extricate himself and his companions from their dangerous situation. Giving up hope for any longer averting the slaughter, Tonti and his men repaired to the French village of the Straits of Mackinac. No longer restrained by the presence of Tonti, the Iroquois fell upon the retreating Illinois and burned and slew up and down the whole length of the valley. The Illinois tribes were scattered to the four winds.

This was the scene to which La Salle returned from Frontenac in November of 1680. He expected to find Tonti and his men at Creve Coeur with the ship completed. Instead he found the whole valley in desolation. The monotony of the charred villages was relieved only by white skulls which had been set up on poles to evidence the terrible wrath of the Iroquois. La Salle was fearful of Tonti's safety. Knowing the peril that awaited him if he were discovered in this immense abbatoir, La Salle nevertheless resolved to find Tonti if he still remained alive. He realized that this venture was desperate. In the hope of preserving some lives, he divided the eight men who were with him. Three, he left with the baggage. With the other five he pushed on down to the mouth of the Illinois, seeking some trace of Tonti. Finding none, he returned the length of the river and to Fort Miami where he was joined by La Forest and the remainder of the party who had just come on.

As La Salle had been passing through the desolate ruins of what had once been the prosperous country of the Illinois, he resolved to collect the survivors of that group with the remnants of several other tribes living nearby into a great Indian confederacy which was to be centered around the French fortress to be built upon the impregnable Rock. He spent the winter of 1680-81 forming such a league. This alone was a stupendous feat and would have entitled La Salle's name to perpetuation. He managed to so overawe the Miamis that they deserted their erstwhile allies, the Iroquois, and moved in with the Mohegans and Illinois at the new village near The Rock.

In the spring of 1681, La Salle again returned to Canada "to appease his creditors and collect his scattered resources." In spite of two years of disaster in the West, in spite of scheming enemies among the Jesuits

and merchants of Canada, in spite of debts bearing interest at forty per cent, he again managed to collect the necessary supplies and equipment for his long deferred descent of the Mississippi.

On his return to the West he was overjoyed to meet the faithful Tonti at Mackinac. By December, the whole party was gathered on the St. Joseph. The frozen Kankakee rendered this route impossible. They crossed the lake to the mouth of the Chicago River where they spent New Year's Day of 1682. Sleds were constructed. The canoes and supplies were strapped to these and once more La Salle began the descent of the Illinois. The party finally encountered open water just below Lake Peoria. Here they embarked, having given up the idea of building a ship, and on February 6, 1682, they left the Illinois and turned the prows of their canoes into the surging waters of the great Mississippi.

The trip down the Mississippi was comparatively uneventful. They encountered hostile Indians. They built Fort Prudhomme, the fifth of the chain of forts, at Chickasaw Bluffs below the mouth of the Ohio. They eventually reached the mouth of the Mississippi in April of 1682. After almost four years of back-breaking toil and heart-rending disappointments, the magnificent courage and persistence of La Salle was rewarded at last. He took possession of the entire Mississippi Valley in the name of Louis XIV of France.

It is not necessary to dwell on the remainder of La Salle's story, extending as it does so far beyond the Illinois Territory. In July, he was back upon the Illinois, and in the fall he had Fort St. Louis built upon the summit of The Rock. Here he gathered his colony of some 20,000 Indians and granted land to his followers. Another of his dreams had come true.

ILLINOIS VALLEY HIS MONUMENT

Leaving Fort St. Louis under the command of Tonti, La Salle went to France where he found himself famous, and justly so. He sought the help of Louis XIV in establishing a colony at the mouth of the Mississippi, from which furs shipped down the river could be shipped to France, avoiding the long, dangerous, and arduous voyage across the Great Lakes and down the St. Lawrence. Louis was intrigued with the idea and gave La Salle four ships and 100 soldiers. On the 24th of July, 1684, the expedition set sail for the delta of the Mississippi. However, misfortunes still dogged the footsteps of La Salle. One of his ships was captured by a Spanish pirate. The other three missed their way and landed the party 200 miles from their destination on the shores of Matagorda Bay on the Texas coast. One by one, the three vessels were lost in a vain search for the mouth of the great river. A fort was built upon the shores of the

bay. For two years the party remained on this spot, debilitated by sickness, disease, and dissension. Finally La Salle led an expedition in search of the Mississippi. On this expedition, he was shot from ambush by a cowardly member of his own party. Thus on March 19, 1687,—at the age of forty-three years, perished one of the most remarkable men who ever set foot on the North American continent. So long as the Illinois Valley remains on the map, it will be a monument to the incomparable courage and indefatigable persistence and patience of its explorer, René Robert Cavalier, Sieur de la Salle.



THE MURDER OF LA SALLE

Reproduced from the London, 1698, Edition of Hennepin's
New Discovery

CHAPTER VII

FRENCH AND BRITISH OCCUPATION

In the autumn of 1683 La Salle left Illinois never to return. Before his departure, however, he saw one of his magnificent dreams realized. The focal point for the confederation of Indians was The Rock, the immense bulk of which still rises above the plain a few miles below Ottawa on the Illinois River. Jutting 125 feet up and over the river to the north, its western brow high above the tops of the great trees below, and its eastern side rendered inaccessible by a wide deep gorge, with a flat summit half an acre in area, it was an ideal natural fortification. Upon their return from the Mississippi, while La Salle was collecting the remnants of the scattered Algonquians around the base of the rock, Tonti was at work fortifying it. The rock was accessible only by a steep and tortuous passage on its southern side. Tonti cut away the trees surmounting the summit and built entrenchments and a log palisade. He erected log quarters for the garrison and storehouses for supplies.

By the time the fortifications were completed the Indians, still fearful of the savage Iroquois, had gathered at the base of the rock, as Parkman says, "like timorous peasantry of the middle ages," seeking the protection of some powerful baron. They were a motley aggregation—Shawnees, Abenakis; Miamis, Mohegans, and Illinois. They lived together there in peaceful intercourse and at one time numbered as many as 20,000.

Upon La Salle's departure for France in 1683, Tonti was left in complete command of the fort, called Fort St. Louis, and of the neighboring settlement of Indians. He was a veritable king in the beautiful savage wilderness which surrounded him. Except for a brief interval when he was supplanted by an agent of La Salle's enemies in Canada, he remained in control of this impregnable outpost of mighty France until 1702 when it was abandoned. Here in this rude stronghold he dealt with the timorous Algonquians and his mutinous men. He withstood a siege by the treacherous Iroquois. For years this remarkable Italian, almost alone in an unfriendly wilderness, through hours of loneliness and despair, suffering untold privations, unrewarded and unapplauded for his stern, kindly, capable performance of duty, remained at his post—the uttermost sentinel of France in the West.

In 1685, having no word from La Salle, having heard rumors of the

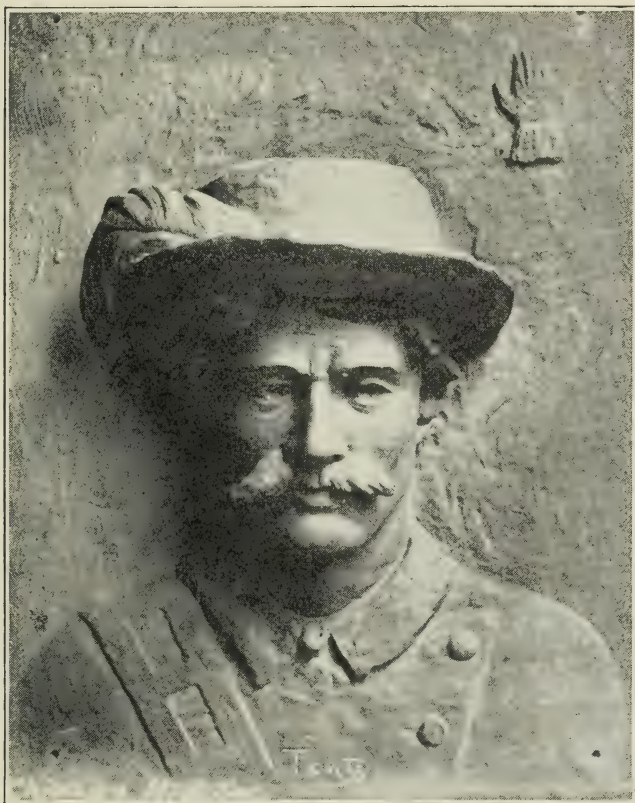
loss of his four ships and that La Salle was lost somewhere on the Gulf coast, Tonti set out to find his friend and master. Down the long Mississippi he went again, all the way to its mouth. He and his men explored east and west from the delta. They found nothing but a "solitude, a voiceless desolation of river, marsh and sea." Unknown to him, several hundred miles to the west, La Salle was battling for his very life with mutinous followers, disease, and the mysteries of early American geography. Finding no trace of La Salle, Tonti sorrowfully made his way back to Fort St. Louis on the Illinois. Here he was when he learned from the miserable remnants of La Salle's party of his friend's ignominious death. Down the Mississippi he went a third time. This time his purpose was to avenge the murder of La Salle and rescue what remained of his party. Pushing into Texas, he ruthlessly tracked his prey until every trace of them had vanished. Bitterly disappointed he returned again to Fort St. Louis where he remained until 1702, when by royal order the fort was abandoned and Tonti was bidden to reside on the Mississippi. Shortly afterwards he disappears from history. There is an Indian legend that, white haired and feeble, in 1718 he returned to the old fort on The Rock to die.

KASKASKIA, CAHOKIA, FORT CHARTRES

About 1695, the restless Illinois moved down into southwestern Illinois onto the peninsula formed by the junction of the Mississippi and Kaskaskia rivers. In the beautiful valley of the latter, about six miles above the confluence of the two rivers, they chose a new site for their village. Soon row upon row of Indian lodges covered the plain. The Jesuit fathers, who had resided with them and ministered to their spiritual needs since the time of Marquette, went along. A log chapel and house enclosed in a neat stockade were built for the priests above the village. The adjoining land was cultivated and cattle, hogs, and other domestic animals were introduced.

In time the place became a trading center and the chief port of embarkation down the river. Frenchmen from the lower Mississippi came up the river and settled there, attracted by the reports of a mild climate and fertile soil. Kaskaskia soon became the metropolis of Northern Louisiana. In 1725 it was made an incorporated town by decree of Louis XV of France. The crude log buildings of the first days were replaced by others of stone and masonry. A Jesuit college was built. Storehouses of the merchants and fur traders sprang up. Captain Pittman, an English traveler, visiting the place in 1776, writes of it:

"It is the most considerable settlement in the country of the Illinois, as well from its number of inhabitants as from its advantageous situation.



(Courtesy of Chicago Historical Society)

HENRI DE TONTI

From bas-relief in the Marquette Building, Chicago

* * * Mons. Paget was the first who introduced water mills in this country, and he constructed a very fine one on the river Cascasquias, which was both for grinding corn and sawing boards. It lies about one mile from the village. * * * The principal buildings are the Church and the Jesuits' house which has a small chapel adjoining it; these, as well as some other houses in the village are built of stone, and considering this part of the world, make a very good appearance. The Jesuits' plantation consisted of 240 arpents (an arpent is 85/100 of an acre) of cultivated land, a very good stock of cattle, and a brewery, which was sold by the French commandant after the country was ceded to the English, in consequence of the suppression of the Order. Mons. Beauvais was the purchaser, who is the richest of the English subjects in this country; he keeps eighty slaves; he furnishes 86,000 weight of flour to the king's magazine, which was only part of the harvest he reaped in one year."

In 1700, about the time Kaskaskia was being settled, Father Pinet established a mission station among the Tamaroa Indians at Cahokia, four miles south of the present site of East St. Louis. Shortly thereafter a number of Frenchmen settled there. Houses were erected. Each settler was given a plot of ground 300 feet square. In time Cahokia became the second city of Northern Louisiana.

With the growing importance of the French settlements on the Mississippi, it became necessary for France to provide them with some sort of protection. Accordingly, in 1718, Pierre Duque Boisbriant, the commandant of the French military forces in Illinois, was dispatched to Kaskaskia with instructions to build a fort on the Mississippi. He selected a site half way between Kaskaskia and Cahokia. The forest was cleared away. Timbers were hewn for the walls. Stone was quarried from the bluffs, four miles away. After two years of labor and the expenditure of 1,000,000 crowns the fort was completed, the most magnificent of its time in the new world. It was named Fort Chartres in honor of the Duc de Chartres, son of the regent of France.

This fort immediately became the center of French military power in the West. Under its walls the village of New Chartres sprang up. Warehouses and the factories of trading companies were erected. A French trading company sent in settlers, mechanics, 500 slaves, and 200 miners. The valley lands between Kaskaskia and Cahokia were cleared. Corn, wheat, tobacco and cotton were planted and cultivated on a large scale. The town, sparkling with the resplendent uniforms of the officers from the post, became the center of fashion and social life of the colony. Its fame spread to every corner of the new world. It became a common saying that "all roads lead to Fort Chartres." But life in the fort was not all a fashion parade. There were Indians, Spanish and English enemies with whom to contend. In 1736, Pierre D'Artaguiette led a proud little army out of the fort against the distant Chickasaws. Hardly a man returned to tell of the terrible massacre of the French. It was to soldiers

from Fort Chartres that Washington surrendered Fort Necessity during the French and Indian war. Soldiers from Fort Chartres were present at the rout of General Braddock.

Besides the three towns already mentioned there sprang up a number of small villages. Prairie du Rocher, fourteen miles from Kaskaskia and in the immediate neighborhood of Fort Chartres, was one; Saint Phillippe, five miles from Chartres on the road to Cahokia, was another. Stockades were built on the Wabash River at what are now Vincennes and Lafayette. In these outlying villages the dwellers were largely Canadians, many of whom married Indian women and drew their livelihood from the fur trade.

LIFE OF THE FRENCH IN ILLINOIS

The houses in which these people lived were rough reproductions of those in which their forebears had lived in France for centuries. More than anything else they resembled the cottages of the French peasants. A framework of posts was set deep in the ground. These were held together and braced by cross strips. The whole was filled in with straw and mortar and carefully whitewashed within and without. The roof was made of thatched straw and the floors were hewn slabs. When completed such dwellings provided simple, comfortable habitations in keeping with the contented, happy ways of their residents.

Outside of Fort Chartres, where sometimes the latest Parisian modes were to be seen, the dress of the Illinois French was simple. Its style was dictated more by the exigencies of their situation and daily work than by a dressmaker's jaded esthetic ideals. It was made largely of coarse blue homespun which in the summer was fashioned into pantaloons for the men. In the winter these were supplanted by buckskin. Coarse blue shirts, long vests of homespun, and a blanket-like cape or cloak with a hood attached generally completed the gentleman's wardrobe. The matrons, on the other hand, by a generous and usually tasteful use of ribbons and beads, showed more vanity in their dress, the most essential garments of which were a short waist and a full, billowing skirt. Both sexes wore moccasins in the winter. In the summer bare feet were not uncommon.

In the villages agriculture was by far the predominant occupation. Thousands of acres of land were cultivated and harvested with rude wooden plows and primitive wooden-wheeled carts. Large crops of tobacco, oats, hops, wheat and corn were raised. The cultivated lands were held by the village as common property. Portions were dealt out to families in proportion to their numbers. If the land was neglected or went uncultivated, it reverted to the village. The pasture and woodlands were used

in common and, as the number of residents increased, portions of this would be added to the cultivated lands. All affairs of this rude society were regulated by an informal council of older men, even the planting and gathering of crops.

Hunting and trapping was another source of livelihood of these early Illinois-French. Those who did not take to agriculture could go on long expeditions up the Mississippi or Missouri and either hunt the fur-bearing animals themselves or trade with the Indians for skins.

Commerce, too, had its votaries and gave employment to many. Furs and agricultural products were bought and sold, collected in warehouses, and then shipped down the river to New Orleans. The voyage down the river and back took several months. The boats were propelled down stream with large oars or sweeps. On the return voyage the oarsmen were assisted by sails. When the wind failed the crew was often forced to "cordell" their way upstream. This meant carrying a rope ahead, tying it to a projecting tree or rock, and then having the crew pull hand over hand. New Orleans supplanted Montreal as the principal mart of the Illinois Country. The pork, tallow, bacon, hides, furs, tobacco, and leather collected in the Illinois Country were exchanged there for rice, indigo, sugar, and European fabrics which were brought up the river to Illinois.

For all their primitive accommodations and hardships, the French in Illinois were a merry, happy-go-lucky lot. Amusements, festivals, and holidays were frequent. Old and young alike enjoyed dancing and all, bond or free, joined in it. Their frank social dispositions made keeping peace with the Indians a comparatively easy matter. Their love of ceremony and happy ways appealed to the savages almost as much as their ferocity in battle appalled them. Separated by thousands of miles from civilized society, they retained all the suavity and civility of their race. The roughest hunter or boatman could on occasion appear in a ball room or before a council fire with the aplomb and gracious demeanor of a well-bred gentleman. There was no social discrimination. Except for the priests and the soldiers, all were equal, all dressed alike and all were on the same social plane—a real democracy.

FRENCH GIVE WAY TO BRITISH

The French held their ascendancy in Illinois from the time of La Salle until the French and Indian war against the English in 1763. For nearly 100 years these bits of France transplanted flourished in this part of the country. Time has almost obliterated them. The once proud and formidable fortresses have crumbled into dust. The cities have been swept away by the overflowing rivers or, deserted, have decayed and disappeared.

The French and Indians in Illinois wept when, in 1765, the English

hoisted their flag over Fort Chartres. Many of the French inhabitants withdrew down the river to territory that was still French. Among the remainder the British established their system of jury trials and civil law. The British government did not encourage further colonization but on the contrary, opposed it, preferring to let this territory remain a hunting ground where only British agents could purchase furs from the Indians. Consequently, the decade of British occupation is remarkable only as a period of stalemate in the progress of the state and valley from savage wilderness to the position it now occupies as one of the richest and most flourishing commonwealths on the face of the earth.

CHAPTER VIII

EARLY AMERICAN SETTLEMENT

Although the Illinois Valley was the first section of Illinois seen by white eyes, and long a dream of France—from the days of La Salle and Joliet for a century or more, during which time France hoped to make this valley the center link between Canada and Louisiana, yet when the American permanent settlers came, they were destined to neglect the Valley of the Illinois for more than a generation.

When Illinois was admitted to the Union in 1818, all her settled counties lay in the southern quarter of the state, below the east and west line running through St. Louis. This earliest population was largely sprung from the settlers who came as a result of the conquest of George Rogers Clark and their immediate friends and neighbors, nearly all of whom had come from Kentucky and Tennessee and had settled in what had early been called the American Bottom, that is, the east bank of the Mississippi, comprising the valley of the Kaskaskia and the Big Muddy, and running north to the parallel of St. Louis.

Most of these men were of the hunter type, desirous of finding a home in the woods, from which they could carve out little farming plots sufficient for their household needs. The economy practiced within the home was distinctly of the homespun variety, producing not only their food and clothing, but also furniture and tools. Making no demands on the outside world for manufactured articles, they had little incentive, if the opportunity had offered, to produce crops or produce for exportation. For this reason, business and business men found little to attract them in their midst, while the universal ideal was to produce only enough for their domestic needs.

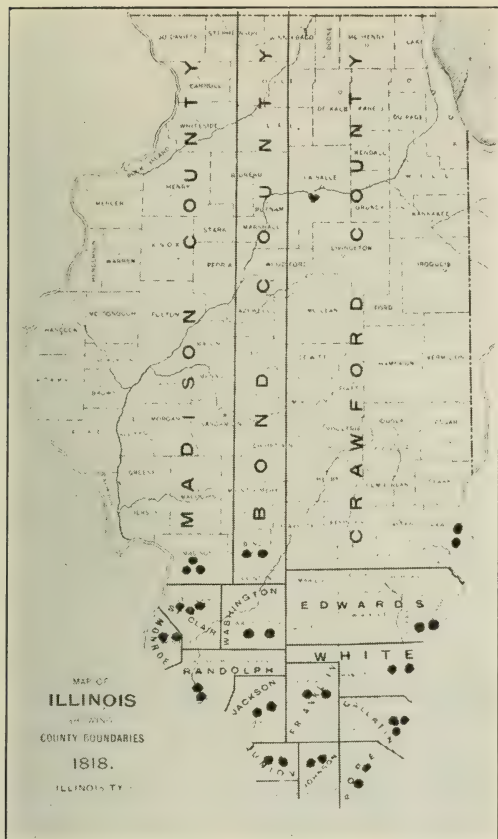
This south end of Illinois had indeed been easy to reach. The waterways of Tennessee and Kentucky led naturally into the Ohio and thence to the Mississippi, the two rivers forming the two boundaries of this lower part of the state. Their principal tributaries, such as the Wabash, the Kaskaskia and the Big Muddy, again made it easy for these first settlers to occupy what would otherwise have been back country, and thus we find the two principal centers of settlement to be those of the Kaskaskia and the Shawneetown regions. It was not until the second generation that the overflow from this southern quarter of the state sent

pioneers northward. They found it easy to follow the Illinois Valley or drift eastward along its principal tributaries such as the Sangamon to an environment congenial to the sons and daughters of the timber folk. Here in the region of the Sangamon settlements occurred the meeting of the southern and the northern elements in the immigration to Illinois.

Below the Sangamon, the predominating pioneer was the southern hunter-farmer type, occupying his timber claim with its little patch of clearing. Here only an occasional northern settler had ventured. But in the Sangamon region, in the late 'Twenties and 'Thirties, the sons of this southern stream came in contact with the farmer type from north of the Mason and Dixon Line. These northern people evaluated the timber as a means of comfortably conquering the virgin lands. They were in no sense hunters. Fowler's experience in his first contact with the Boltenhouse prairies near the Wabash, intimately revealed the strategy of the forest, even to one so enthusiastically loving the wide sweep of grass lands. He and Birkbeck, about to enter thousands of acres of government land in the Boltenhouse prairies, yet saw fit to buy at once all of the timber surrounding the prairies before they were sufficiently provided with funds to acquire the entire tract.

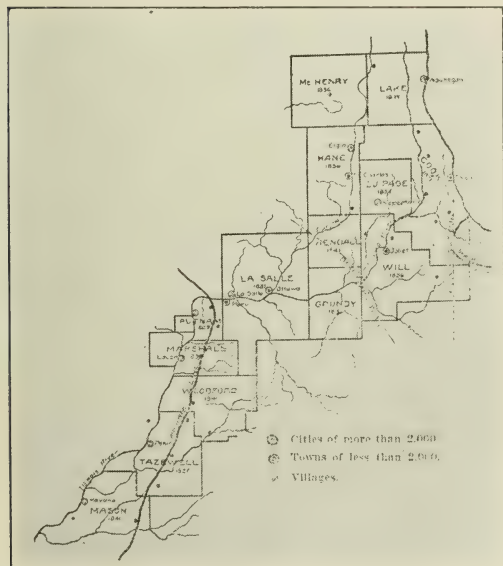
These two human streams of settlers, the northern farmer and the southern hunter, as they occupied the middle country along the Illinois Valley, proved very irritating to each other in many respects. Their attitude toward business and the adornments of a settled life, such as schools, towns, roads, churches, were almost diametrically opposed. In religious organizations and political affiliations they were, and have been, strangers to each other.

One can easily understand the thrill with which the first American settlers looked upon the bounties of this rich Illinois Valley. Even Marquette, as one of the first boatload of white men to see the waters of the river, surprises us with the wildly enthusiastic picture which he drew of this wilderness. Here he saw "a terrestrial paradise in which earth, air and water, unbidden by labor, contributed most copious supplies for the sustenance of life," and then he follows with a very vivid description of the trees and shrubs and grasses that might sustain the life of man. His imagination is caught with the beauty of the grass, the flowers and the foliage of the trees. He was conscious of the wealth of the food value in streams, of fur-bearing animals, and the game birds of the heavens. If the lonely and hard pressed Marquette could find occasion for wild enthusiasm of this valley, it is not surprising that the white man of the earliest part of the nineteenth century, coming here to carve out a home for himself in this country of fertile diversity and free land, was guilty of effusions tending toward the ridiculous.



(Courtesy of the Illinois Historical Society)

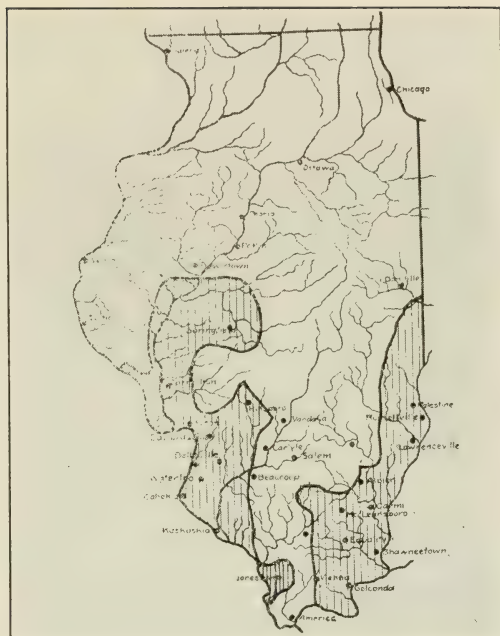
The early approach of settlements into the state from the southward shows in the peculiar division of the northern portion of the state.



ILLINOIS AND FOX RIVER VALLEYS,
1850

Section west of the prairie line is more than 20 per cent. woodland. Year indicates date of county organization.

From Pavley's Settlement of Illinois.

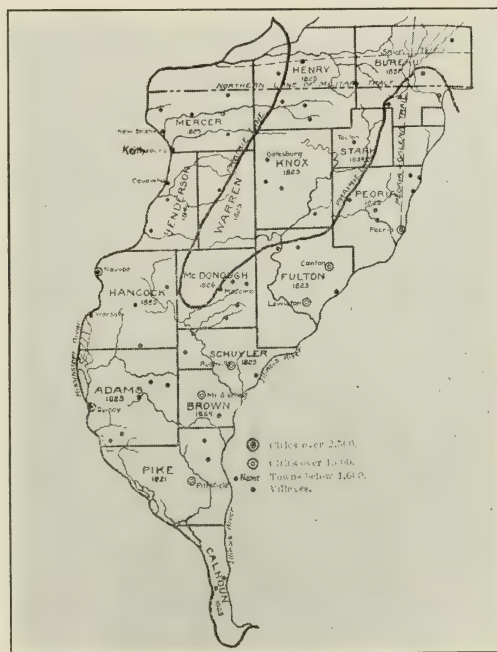


(Courtesy of the University of Wisconsin, Madison)

ILLINOIS IN 1830

Shaded portion shows location of settlement; six or more per square mile; by counties. This map reveals the early occupation of the lower Illinois Valley by migration from the south.

From Pavley's Settlement of Illinois.



THE MILITARY TRACT, 1850

Curved line shows the limits of the prairie; less than 20 per cent. woodland. Year indicates date of county organization.

From Pavley's Settlement of Illinois.

There were two sets of forces which account on the one hand for the early settlement of the lower end of the state, and retarded the settlement of the Illinois Valley, as well as the central part of the state. Before the War of 1812, the Indians of northern Illinois had furnished one of the battle grounds and danger spots of America. Following that war the Indian treaties, more or less incidental to the treaty of peace between England and the United States, the hindrance offered by Indian occupation to actual white settlers had been pretty well removed by 1818 from all that part of the state. South of the Hennepin, the Sacs and the Foxes in this connection had affirmed the earlier treaties giving a belt of Indian section from the region of Quincy on the Mississippi, to the Ottawa Country, together with a strip on both sides of the projected canal between that point and the Chicago region. Treaties of 1818-19 had cleared the white man's title to all the land lying south of the Illinois and Kankakee rivers, as well as extinguishing the Kickapoo claim to lands earlier granted in the upper Wabash region. Throughout the 'Twenties, the settlement of the middle and upper counties of the Illinois Valley was somewhat hindered by the presence of the Indian in the region north of the river, and it was not until after the Black Hawk war and the final expulsion of the Indians from the northern part of Illinois, that these counties could forget the more or less imminent danger of Indian outrages.

The other element that entered into the settlement of Illinois, was the issue of slavery. Before the final settlement of that issue in 1824, slavery had proved an irritating factor in the settlement of the state. In the southern sections, many men had settled who had emigrated from the older states of the South to Illinois, in order to escape the blight of that institution. It is true that some of the opposite sort had come from the same region, hopeful that they might see the prohibition of 1787 against slavery in the Northwest Territories, set aside by the action of the state. These extreme pro-slavery settlers were aggravated by the popular conception that a certain stream of well-to-do southern life, with its negroes and capital, passed around the State of Illinois to find a safe haven in Missouri. However, the westward movement into Illinois, and much of it directed to the region north of the mouth of the Illinois, was so marked that in the year 1835 the sales of public land reached \$5,000,000.

A very serious hindrance to the settlement of Illinois was found in the actual or assumed unhealthfulness of the state. Schoolcraft, ascending the Illinois in August of 1821 declared, "The insalubrity of the climate, particularly during the summer season, must be considered as presenting a formidable impediment to its speedy settlement." He was deeply impressed by the "pale and emaciated countenance; females shivering with ague or burning with fever." A settler of the Sangamon region declared to him that "in this country, life is at least fifty per cent below par in

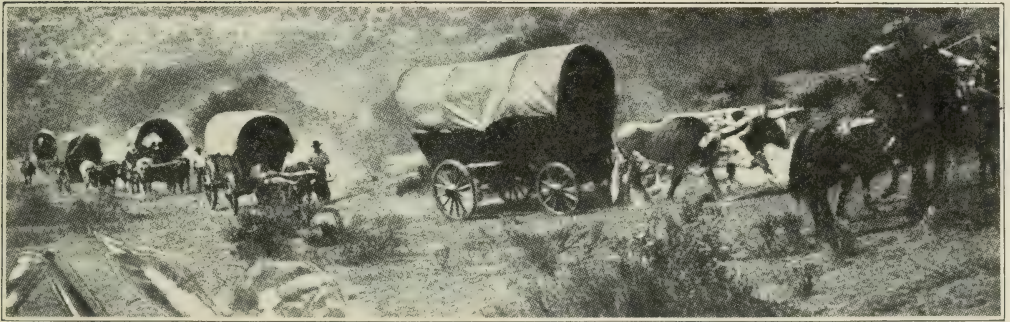
the months of August and September. I have often thought that I run a greater risk every season that I spend here, than I would in a battle." Another very clever observer of central Illinois recounts as late as 1838 his experiences as follows: "Our route this day lay on the western bank of the Illinois River. From Peoria, the river for several miles above, expands to a lake of from one to three miles in width, and the current is so sluggish as to be scarcely perceptible. This lake is lined on either side by heavy bottoms densely timbered, as yet unoccupied, save in a very few places, by settlers. It is a beautiful spot to look upon, in its primitive and unbroken wildness, but the idea of disease and death lurking in every ripple and concealed beneath every leaf, drove from my mind every idea of beauty, and converted the whole into one vast cemetery, beautiful in its external show, but the repository of dead men's bones. How any one can be persuaded to reside here, is to me a mystery. We were hailed by a feeble voice, as we passed a cabin on the banks of this lake, requesting us to stop. It came from a pale, emaciated woman, who told us she was the only well person in the family, that they were 'all down with the fever.' She wished us to call on the doctor and send him to their aid, as she could not leave the sick ones long enough to go herself."

Conditions such as these must have been indeed disheartening to such settlers as had known the comforts, safety, health and society of the New England villages. Jones, in his "Illinois and the West," warns the Yankee settler of another detraction. He says, "He will be a singular Yankee if he does not suffer dreadfully for the first six months—perhaps for a year—that most uncomfortable of all diseases, homesickness. He will meet with deprivations such as want of society, uncomfortable houses, coarseness of provisions, want of sympathy, languor occasioned by the process of acclimatization, remoteness from post office or store, and the entire absence of many of the little comforts which belong to every decent New England home, and all this is less endurable by the female emigrant."

Our generation, despite its recent experience with disastrous speculation in farming lands, must find it difficult to sense the mania of the 'Thirties and 'Forties for real estate speculation, both in farm lands and town sites. There was a vast amount of literature of a propaganda sort, put out by town lot speculators along the frontier. Every community was quick to believe that its little community was destined to be the real metropolis of the West. Paper fortunes were made almost over night, dealing in town lots of ventures which existed only on paper, or sometimes merely in the imagination of its promoters. Many auctions of town lots were held at great distances from the location of the town. One wise commentator remarked that "the stable articles of Illinois export were town plats." Considerable concern was expressed by some, that if the towns continued to grow, the farming population would lack arable



A PIONEER LOG HOME



THE ARRIVAL OF THE PIONEERS

land. Of these short-lived boom towns, Kankakee City in Grundy County is an example. Its population never exceeded seventy-five, though its lots were sold in large numbers in New York and Chicago, netting its promoters a fortune, while nothing of the town remained at the close of the panic of 1837.

On the other hand, the vast holdings of farm land companies was a very retarding influence in the settlement of Illinois. In Grundy County, the first settlers found themselves surrounded by vast acreages held out of the market for prices so high as to discourage actual settlement. It is clear that such a situation would prevent the healthy contiguous occupation of the countryside, and would prevent the opening of roads, the building of schools, and many other conveniences of organized society.

But in spite of all these hindrances, the growth of population in Illinois in the 'Thirties and 'Forties was one of the astounding factors of American life, and was one of the forces that led the children of the East, and later foreign emigrants, to pour into the West. Perhaps the most evident of such forces was this western fever, composed as it was of a hunger for land and an irresistible wanderlust. The application of steam to the boats of the western rivers at the close of the War of 1812 had done much to ameliorate the long river trips, to shorten the time and expense, and also to give a hope of better markets to the pioneer in the West. With the completion of the Erie Canal, the inhabitants of New England and the North Atlantic states had a comparatively quick and cheap communication by way of Chicago, with the north half of Illinois. Even to the jeopardy of their immediate property interests, the cities of the Atlantic seaboard which enjoyed improved communication with the West, entered into eager competition in the drawing of trade from the West, which in turn, of course, stimulated the exodus of their own residents to that region.

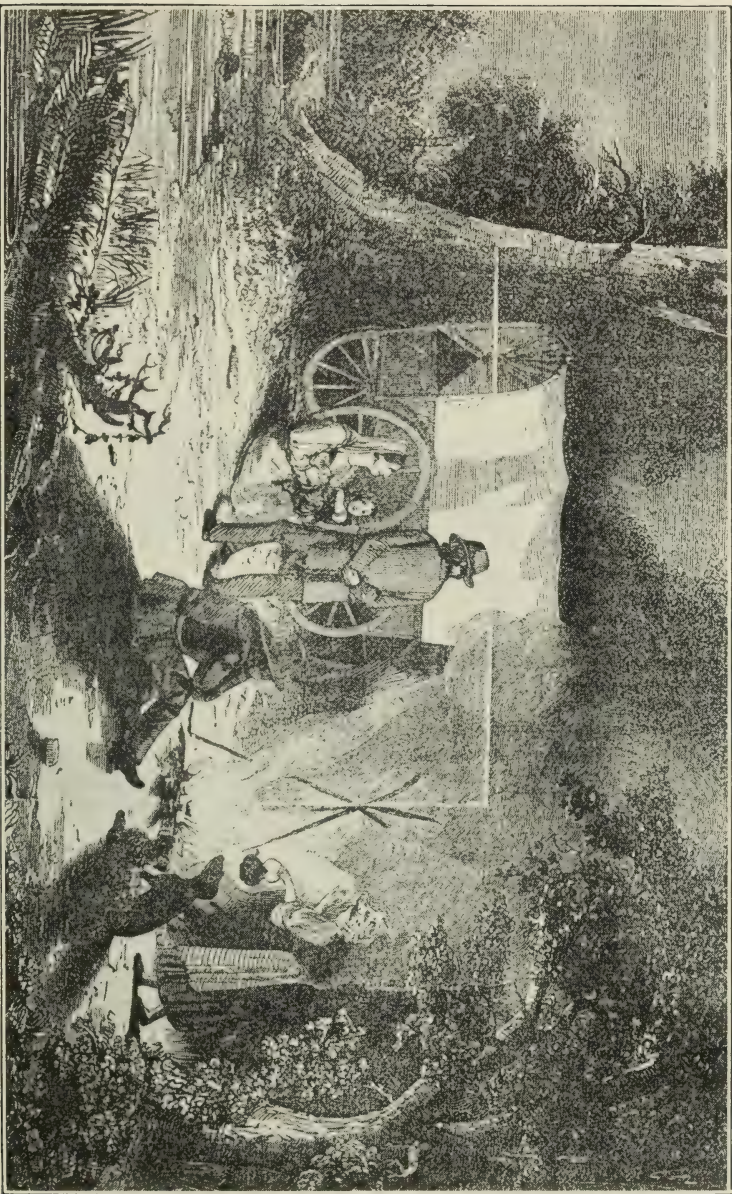
Many wage earners of the old East were actuated by a sense of personal independence to escape the rather severe discipline of their station in life, and to carve out for themselves a life of independence in the farming regions of the West. The financial depressions of 1819 and 1837 sharpened this sense of discontent, especially to the wage earners who found themselves frequently out of work, or working at a reduced wage. Many small business men had been uprooted by the wide bankruptcy of the same period, or oppressed by the uniform high rate of interest, seldom less than ten per cent and frequently as high as fifty per cent per annum. Side by side with this unrest in business circles and among the wage earners, was going on, all in the same years, a very serious agricultural disturbance. The soil of the older sections of the Atlantic coast had long since been almost exhausted. Commercial disturbance of the embargo and of the War of 1812 had led many land

owners of the East to turn their lands into grazing areas, and their interest to the production of wool. Meanwhile the improvement of communication had made it profitable for other farmers of the old East to engage in dairying. Both of these developments in agriculture tended to throw out of employment many who had previously made a living as agricultural workers, or small owners of farm land. These, in their desperation, turned rather joyfully towards the golden West. Again, the wild speculation of the 'Thirties led to higher costs for eastern labor. The period of the 'Thirties was to see the first considerable movements among labor in America to unionize, in order to increase wages to meet these new conditions in the cost of living. In this period, nearly all the seaboard cities were visited with a series of labor strikes. It is estimated that the panic of '37 closed nine-tenths of the factories of the East, and this stimulated mightily the western migration.

As soon as the West began to settle and produce its cereal crops, these entered into a rather ruinous competition with similar products produced at a higher cost upon the older farming lands of the East. This in turn had a double effect of inducing the eastern land owner to turn his lands into grazing areas, and on the other hand, increased the unemployed, who drifted westward.

The late 'Twenties and 'Thirties were to see a very great increase in the foreign emigration into the United States. This naturally tended to accumulate along the Atlantic coast, where on the whole, it tended to fill the mill towns, and in so doing dispossessed the native worker of his town job, while he and his family found refuge in ever increasing thousands, upon the frontier in Illinois.

Side by side with this movement to the West from New England and the north Atlantic states, there was a condition developing in the lower South conducive to migration on the part of a large part of the population toward the free West. It is quite clear that under slavery and the production of staple crops, there was a distinct tendency towards the accumulation of farming lands in larger holdings. The increased capital needed to successfully handle or produce staples under slavery, constantly tended to squeeze out the small individual farmer. There was also, perhaps, a certain social odium incurred by the white "small" farmer which led to the same end. The back counties of the states of the lower South had always had a population hostile to the institution of slavery. As these people found cotton with its black labor encroaching upon their ancient precincts, there was a tendency to sell out and go to the old Northwest. In both the North and South, every period of industrial depression shows a large number of people dispossessed by bankruptcy and foreclosure and so thrown on the road to Illinois and the West. Even in the older states west of the mountains, such as Ohio and Indiana, there was



A NIGHT ENCAMPMENT OF EMIGRANTS ON THE ROAD TO ILLINOIS
From an old time engraving

a set of circumstances which led their citizens to migrate to the newer environments of Illinois. As the public domain in these regions passed to individual holdings, the large families with their insistent need of increased acreage, found their relief in financing the younger members of the family to migrate westward. Their thinner and non-glaciated soils naturally proved less attractive than the rich and thick loams of the region only a few hundred miles westward. And then an earlier very disastrous experience in these older Appalachian states with a system of internal improvements, many of which had been utter failures, left a heritage of debt, which with its higher tax burden, discouraged many of the farming population to the point where they were willing to risk the hardships of the frontier.

Of all the many forces stimulating migration to the West, the Erie Canal, opened in 1825, was perhaps the most dominant of many, for it worked in a double way. In the first place, it opened a cheaper and more comfortable means of approach to the West by way of the Great Lakes, and in the second place, made farming in the Middle West more attractive financially. Within a decade of its opening, considerable wheat and flour were passing through the Erie Canal, even though the rate then stood at from twenty-five cents to thirty-five cents per bushel. Ten years later, this cost had dropped to five cents, and the amount had risen to enormous proportions. There was a peculiar irony in the fact that the tax on New York farms had built the Erie Canal, which in turn was to bring them a ruinous competition from the newer and more fertile lands of Illinois, and thus stimulated or accentuated the tendency towards bankruptcy among the New York farmers, and also tended towards turning their arable fields into grazing lands. Only those New York farms which lay adjacent to the canal, profited immediately from it, whereas the lands of the northern and southern parts of the state were directly hit by the competition offered by the cheaper cereals from Illinois and the West.

The water route offered between the Erie Canal and the Great Lakes was not at first highly attractive to emigrants to the West. Not many came all the way by boat to Chicago. Some of these left the water at Buffalo, others at Detroit, while still others took advantage of the Ohio Canals to go from Lake Erie ports to the Ohio River, and thence by the roundabout way of the Mississippi and the Illinois, and their tributaries. With the application of steam to the lake boats, the travel from the East to Chicago was very much augmented.

The fever for emigration to the West was so strong that many who could not afford the expense of the more comfortable water routes, did not hesitate to face the terrible hardships of an overland journey, and many who were not possessed of a team and wagon, or even a saddle, eagerly pushed through the wilderness on foot. The early accounts

of pioneer doings in the West are full of authentic reports of men who put themselves into the shafts of light vehicles, serving as draft animals in their quest for the golden West. And this mirage of a better future in the West seemed to abide with the early settlers of Illinois, even after they reached their new homes. Jones has much to say about the western fever for "improving." He says, "A New Englander can have but the faintest conception of the rage existing in the West for 'improving the country' as it is significantly called. New farms, new towns, new railroads and new canals are continually projecting, and you cannot fall upon a half dozen persons anywhere but that the burden of their conversation is of some new project or other."

Those who came by wagon from the East to Illinois, found many discomforts and hindrances. Flies, mud, bad roads, high water at the fords, were daily commonplaces, distressing and hindering the travelers. If they made fifteen miles a day, it was a high average. The trip from the old Atlantic states consumed from seven to nine weeks. Although the main roads were fairly well supplied with taverns, yet the great majority of the tourists found it not only cheaper, but perhaps more comfortable, to camp by the wayside. The average emigrant's wagon must have displayed a strange medley of equipment. Under the canvas was apt to be an array of women, babies, guns and nicknacks. Swinging on the axles beneath were the pots and kettles. The Yankee usually brought his plow, a generous supply of salt meat, tea, molasses and his Bible. Frequently the emigrant attempted to bring considerable herds of live stock with him. We have an account of one who brought 500 sheep, another a drove of 150 hogs, but as a rule, each family had only the necessary horses, a cow or two, with occasional sheep and hogs.

The most popular, however, of the routes to the West was that offered by the Ohio, the Mississippi, and their tributaries. Steam having been applied to the boats of the Ohio in 1811, within a period of two decades the steamboat had come to dominate the river shipping. At almost the same time, it had been applied to the boats on the Mississippi, and at the end of the second decade, 1828, had invaded the shallow waters of the Illinois River. Within eight years there were thirty-five steamboats plying on the Illinois alone. This made it comparatively easy for the emigrant to reach the middle counties of the Illinois Valley, as far north at least as Hennepin, and in turn gave a market to these emigrants now turned farmers. The steamboat also worked a change in the nature of the settlements along the Illinois. At first, towns had been established, frequently at some distance from the river, usually near a favorable mill site, or at the strategic crossing of the land trails, but after the coming of the steamboat, the market places of the valley moved to the river bank, and thus we see towns like Beardstown, Pekin, Peoria,

Ottawa, and Hennepin, coming into their own, while other towns like Rushville and Lewistown and many others, were to either stand still or retrograde. As early as 1834, Beardstown claimed to do more shipping business than any other place in the state. In the year 1836, there were 450 arrivals and departures of river boats from Beardstown. In 1837, she claimed the honor of being the largest pork market in the state.

Throughout the '30s and '40s, the Ohio River was the popular route to the West. In 1834 a Cincinnati newspaper declared, "We are so completely overrun by emigrants or movers, with carriages, wagons, cattle, horses, dogs and sheep, that we are compelled to speak. Our streets are a living mass of men, women and children, and everyone joyously wending their way to their new habitation. The number of emigrants who have left this city for the northern part of Illinois, has been unusually large this season."

However, Chicago soon became the gateway to northern Illinois, especially after the Black Hawk war had removed all danger of Indian uprisings to the inhabitants of the state. In 1833, four boats had come to Chicago harbor. The next year the number had grown to 180, while by 1836, more than 450 boats had reached that port. A Chicago newspaper, in 1835, declares that "almost all vessels from the lower lakes are full of passengers, and our streets are thronging with wagons loaded with household furniture and implements necessary for farming. Foot passengers, too, with well filled packs on their shoulders, come in large numbers." Well established lines of communication with the center parts of the state, led out from Chicago. "Hubbard Trace" led from Chicago to Danville, and to settlements along the Vermillion and Wabash rivers. By 1836, a wagon service had been established between Chicago and the Kankakee River. From this point, flatboats were used in connection with the steamboats on the Illinois.

Nearly all that part of the state above the line of Springfield was to be settled by New England people, the bulk of whom came after 1830. In many of the counties, this New England emigration found a sparse population recruited from the southern counties of the state, themselves sprung from the Kentucky and Tennessee emigrants. Between these two diverse stocks at first there was considerable irritation. The New England stream was apt to establish itself in the form of a colony here in the West. Thus, in 1835, a group of New Hampshire people established the colony of Hanover in Woodford County. Delavan, in southern Tazewell County, is an interesting example of settlement by colonies, or incorporated companies. In 1837 a company of Rhode Island farmers, having subscribed the sum of \$44,000, after sending out an advance agent who bought some 23,000 acres of virgin soil, located much to the surprise of the older settlers, entirely in the open prairies. These people at first

lodged in a common house until they were able to erect their individual buildings. An interesting by-product of this adventure was a clause in the original contract of partnership, forbidding the selling and use of liquor on the premises. This expedient of the New England colonies to establish at first a common house, was also witnessed at Mackinaw and Rockwell.

The New England emigration, while predominating in the upper Illinois Valley, did not reach much below the line of Peoria. Jones, in 1837, was much taken by the New England appearance of Tremont, in Tazewell County. He speaks of Tremont as the "Shire town for Tazewell County, and situated in a delightful prairie, bounded on the east and south by a large belt of forest, on the Mackinaw Creek, and on the north and west by another on Dilon's Creek, and called Pleasant Road. The timber—as all forests are here called—is distant from the village from one and a half to three miles. * * * Tremont is beautifully laid off in squares, with streets of 100 feet in width, running at right angles with each other, and * * * in the center of the town, ten acres are thrown into a public square * * * the character of the place is New England, there being three-fourths of the population from that section of our country." In addition to the population of the old lower southern quarter of the state, with its southern heritage and traditions, and of this New England stream so rapidly, during the '30s and '40s, to occupy the northern part of the state and the upper and the middle counties of the Illinois Valley, were to be found also certain foreign elements, especially in the northern half of the state, where there were a few Germans, Swedes, Irish, English and Scotch emigrants. This movement from Europe first became noticeable in the decades of 1830 and 1840. It was estimated that by 1850, one-third of the Chicago population was foreign. Large numbers of Europeans found remunerative employment as agricultural workers, or if they possessed the means, were establishing themselves upon the fertile and cheap land in northern Illinois. One stock, the Irish, had first been attracted to Illinois by the hope of employment on some of the public works, such as the early railroads and the Illinois and Michigan Canal. Periods of depression on these public improvements caused the stoppage of active work, and many of these discharged laborers found employment on farms. Within a decade were to be found many Irish families established upon their farm homes, along the line of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. Many factors had tended to increase the emigration of the German people from the fatherland, during the '30s and '40s. Agricultural depression, depletion of the soil, unfavorable seasons, failure of vineyards, over-population, industrial disturbances due to the introduction of machinery, and the tempting solicitations of agents for the trans-Atlantic companies, who

painted glorious pictures of a land of milk and honey in the western part of the United States, all conspired to augment the German migration to the West and Illinois. As these newcomers from Europe entered the state, they found a few German centers already planted within the confines of Illinois. These had been offshoots from the earlier German settlements in places such as Cincinnati and St. Louis. Most of these were to be found in the line of counties on the southern edge of the prairie section of the state, but as the stream grew, it tended more and more to come directly to Chicago, and from there it spread into the northern valley counties. Mason, Woodford, Peoria, in the '30s, received a large number of such emigrants and the towns of Perry, Pike County, and Bath and Havana in Mason County, were attractive to this German stream. In the '40s, the upper counties of the valley, such as Will, received a heavy population from this stream.

Chicago was to receive practically the whole of the Scandinavian migration to this state. These people entered at New York and came almost directly, by the Erie Canal and the Great Lakes, to Chicago, where they passed to the open and cheap lands in the upper valley, and in the counties to the north. The region of our study was to receive in the fourth decade of the nineteenth century, a very heavy migration from England, where they were suffering very pronounced depression, many substantial tenant farmers finding themselves in bankruptcy, the laboring class face to face with lower wages, and all the farming world disrupted by the incoming of labor-saving machinery. All these forces tended to stimulate English migration to the land of promise, Illinois.



ROSS MANSION, LEWISTOWN

Erected in 1856 by Colonel Lewis W. Ross, in whose honor the town of Lewistown was named

CHAPTER IX

TRANSPORTATION ON THE ILLINOIS RIVER

The drama of the Illinois River is only a part of that greater drama embodying all the western rivers, notably the Mississippi and the Ohio. From the time of Marquette and Joliet to the great era of the railroad in the 1880's the Illinois River has had a vital share in the life of the Valley. To the river the early pioneer owed his very existence; it provided him a highway by which his products could be sent to market and necessities returned. Not only did it offer an easy access to New Orleans but it also offered, as compared with pack horses, a swift and cheap one. The first settlers who floated down the Ohio from the East and poled their way up the quiet waters of the Illinois, as well as those who came by the slow and tedious overland methods, shunned the rich inland acreage for the wooded shores of the Illinois. Along its banks towns sprang up almost overnight, many of which were later to fall into decay and ruin.

As early as 1720 farmers were floating their products in flatboats through the waters of the Illinois and Mississippi to New Orleans, which was the early goal of Illinois shippers. These flatboats were usually built by the combined efforts of several farmers who would then accept non-perishable farm products for transit to New Orleans. Such products included bacon, eggs, lard, hides, certain vegetables, beeswax, lumber, furs, products of the loom, flour, wheat, corn, oats, and often live stock. Gould in his "History of River Navigation" says that in 1746 there was a great scarcity in provisions at New Orleans and the French settlements at the Illinois sent in one winter, upwards of 800,000 pounds of flour. This trade movement still prevailed a century later. The meat-packing plants at Lacon, for example, often sent whole steamer loads of meat to New Orleans without breaking bulk.

Because of the broad-bottom construction of the early flatboats they could not reascend the river against the current; consequently, after they had reached their destination, they were knocked down and sold for lumber or fire wood. These empty boats sold in New Orleans for from thirty dollars to \$200 in the early days. In 1861 the war stopped flatboating.

Before the advent of steam many kinds of hand-propelled boats could

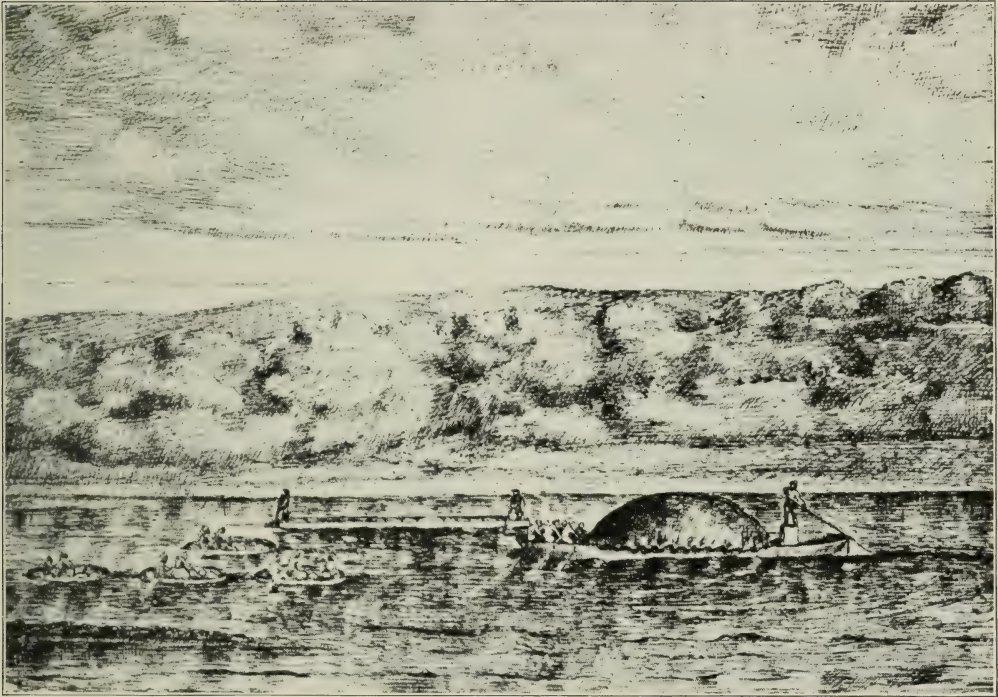
be seen on the Illinois. The most common of these craft was the flatboat of the fifteen-ton variety and costing around \$100. These flatboats were rectangular structures boarded up on both sides to a height of three to four feet. They were often unroofed and the only shelter consisted of a cabin for the owner and a shed for the horses and cattle. These boats varied greatly in size, being constructed according to the various needs of the families using them. They were propelled by large oars called "sweeps" on the sides, a long oar at the stern which acted as a rudder, and a short front oar called the "gouger." Among the other kinds of boats frequently used were barges which carried from two to thirty tons and keelboats which could be used in carrying produce up stream. These keelboats were from forty to eighty feet in length and seven to nine feet wide. They required one man to steer and two to row in descending, but many more were needed to ascend.

The personal history of a family living in Lewistown describes the use of one of these keelboats:

"The Phelps had a keelboat built for their own trade to St. Louis which was run by Norman Scovill as its captain. I was present at one time when they were loading this boat at Thompson's Lake. The cargo consisted of barrels of pork and honey, packages of deerskins, and furs, barrels of dried venison, ham, beeswax and tallow, sack of pecans, hickory nuts, ginseng and feathers, and dry hides. In an ordinary stage of water it took about four days to run a keelboat to St. Louis, by poles, oars and sails, and from twenty to twenty-five days to return. I had gone to St. Louis one time with my father with a drove of horses, and came back with Norman Scovill on his keelboat. The river was quite high, and we had to do a great deal of "cordelling" and "bushwhacking," and it took us twenty-five days to come to Havana."

Sided and roofed craft, resembling oblong arks, were called Kentucky or New Orleans boats. The Allegheny or Mackinaw skiff was a covered skiff carrying from six to ten tons, and much used in the Illinois and upper-Mississippi trade.

The hardships encountered by the early flatboat men from the Illinois Country form part of the vivid history of the Mississippi River. Fortunate, indeed, was the flatboat man who returned from New Orleans with his life and money intact. Dangers threatened him on every hand. The banks of the Mississippi were lined with inns and hangouts, inhabited by thieves and murderers. Sometimes these outlaws murdered the crew of the flatboat outright and took the produce on to New Orleans themselves. A still more common method was to scrape the calking from the boats while their owners were eating and drinking on shore. The owners would then be informed that their boat was sinking and their hosts would very graciously offer to help save the cargo, making off with it in the process. Such a hangout called the "Crow's Nest"



BULL BOATS ON WHICH FURS WERE BROUGHT DOWN THE ILLINOIS
RIVER TO ST. LOUIS

was located on Stack Island 170 miles above Natchez on the Mississippi. Here the desperadoes perfected their disguises, plotted their murders and divided their booty. One night a company of flatboat men determined to rid the river forever of these criminals. They surrounded the place and captured the occupants. River justice is quick and sure and soon each of the robbers met death by a well-swung axe in the hands of a flatboat man.

The journey downstream was precarious because of hazards in the river itself. Snags had to be watched for and guarded against. Swift currents which flowed from the main channel often led the boat into still bayous from which it was very difficult to extract the clumsy craft. Rude sails were sometimes used when the wind was favorable.

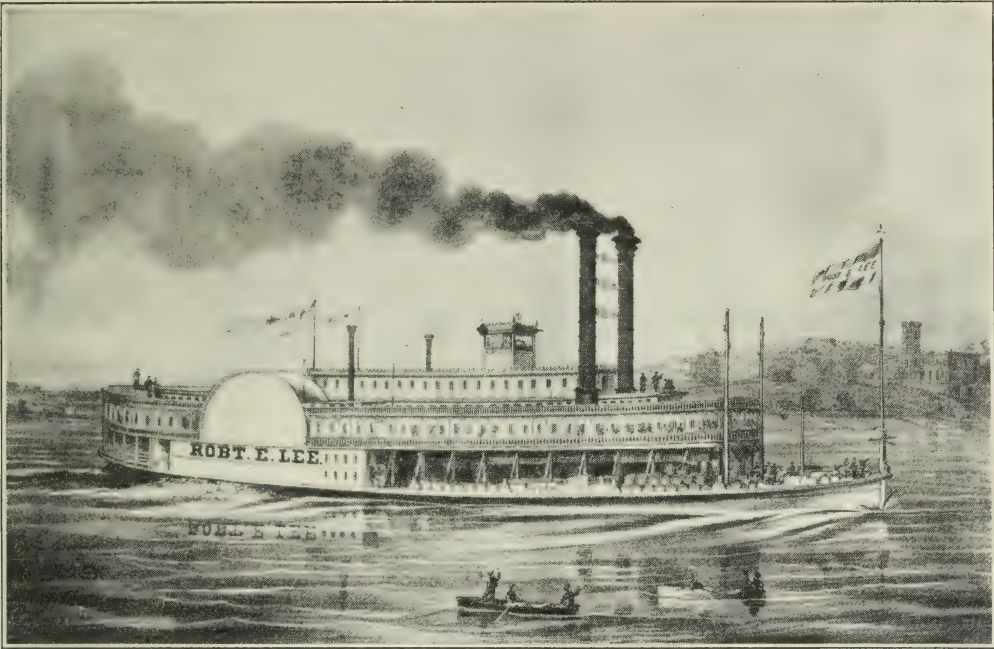
After arriving at New Orleans new dangers beset the unsuspecting boatmen. Royal Street, the main thoroughfare of the old city, was filled with gambling houses. Bright lights, whirling wheels, soft carpets, clinking glasses and beautiful Creole girls beckoned.

Not alone was the trip to New Orleans dangerous, for the return trip often embodied more tragic consequences. Before the time when cheap deck passage could be had on ascending steamboats, the return was made on foot or horseback. The money was carried in a belt which was worn around the waist next to the skin. Bandits along the banks posed as travelers and relieved the sojourners of their money and very often their lives. Probably the most infamous of these robbers were the Harp brothers and John Murrell who believed firmly in the old adage "Dead men tell no tales." They operated along the Mississippi north of New Orleans and it was Murrell's proud boast that none of his victims ever floated. He had a method of disemboweling the corpses and filling them with stones which took away their buoyancy.

Before the time of steamboats the North was supplied with southern products by keelboat. The "half-horse, half-alligator" type of boatman engaged in this traffic underwent terrific hardships. Day in and day out they battled the current of the mighty river. When the bank was covered with brush they poled the boat. From fourteen to thirty miles were considered a good day's work. Four months were required in poling boats from New Orleans to St. Louis, making possible only one trip a year from the Illinois Country. The process of poling a boat was no weakling's job. A fifteen-inch walk ran along the gunwales on either side of the central-roofed compartment. The boatmen, poles against their shoulders and firmly bedded in the bottom, would double themselves forward and tramp from bow to stern on these footways, laboriously pushing the craft ahead. They worked in continuous lines, as one man reached the stern of the footway, he pulled his pole from the mud, ran forward, and again took his place at the end of the sweating crew. When

the banks were clear, a long line, often 1,000 feet in length, called a cordelle, was used. This line was fastened to the boat and pulled by men on shore. Twenty to forty men were needed to "cordelle" a boat. The constant winding of the river was another source of irritation to the boatmen. The swift current on the outside of the curves forced them to seek the inside. Many times they had to cross the river to gain the inside curve and in so doing they often lost a half mile. These men played as hard as they worked. Fighting was a common pastime and a crew was not together long before one man was wearing a red feather in his cap signifying that he was the best fighter on board. No rules of etiquette were observed in their fights, and teeth, feet, knees and thumbs were readily used. Whenever they stopped at river towns they were complete masters and did what they pleased. One of the most famous of these "half-horse, half-alligator" boatmen was Mike Fink. He had begun life as a scout but turned boatman because scouting as a profession was too much of a routine job. Mike was a bully and a boaster and he kept his soul and body together by living up to his boasts. His favorite challenge was, "I kin outrun, out jump, throw down, knock down, drag out, and lick any man in the country. I'm a salt-river roarer! I love the wimmen and I'm chock full of fight."

Amidst the foregoing perils of the great river a tall gaunt man slowly piloted his way to New Orleans in the spring of 1831. This young giant was none other than Abraham Lincoln, who was later to pilot a great nation through the horrors of a civil war. The story of Lincoln's voyage to New Orleans is but a typical example of the trips made by the many Illinois farmers and merchants. In February, 1831, Denton Offut—"a hard drinker, a hustler, and a talker, shrewd with his tongue, easy with promises, a believer in pots of gold at the rainbow's end"—engaged Lincoln together with John Hanks and John Johnson to take a flatboat to New Orleans. Offut promised to have the boat ready as soon as the snow was gone. When Lincoln and his companions arrived at the Sangamon River, they found Offut drunk in Buckhorn Tavern and no flatboats in sight. Unable to secure a boat Offut hired Lincoln and his friends to build one, paying them twelve dollars a month. Timber was floated down from government land upstream and a near-by mill sawed the necessary planks. After a month of work, shortened by the entertaining stories of Lincoln, the boat was finished. It measured eighty feet in length and eighteen feet in width, and was loaded with bacon, corn and hogs. The southern journey began about the middle of April. They had not gone far when the boat stuck on the Cameron mill dam at New Salem. Lincoln won the respect and admiration of the owner and spectators by boring a hole in one end of the boat so that by tilting it the water would run out and the boat could be dislodged. The journey



THE ROBT. E. LEE

Fastest river boat. St. Louis & New Orleans Packet Line, Captain John W. Cannon



((Copyright Marine Photo Co.))

STEAMER BELLE OF PIKE

A popular boat on the Illinois River in 1859 and the early '60s

downstream was soon continued amid the shouts of flatboat men and the throb of steamboats plying up and down the river. Upon arriving at New Orleans, Lincoln and his companions tied their craft along the river front where St. Mary's Market now stands. There were thousands of river boats here, tied side by side, and one could walk for a mile on them without stepping ashore. Lincoln remained in the colorful city of New Orleans a month. There is no doubt that he lived in the boatmen's rendezvous called the Swamp, "a wild, rough quarter where roulette, whiskey, and the flint-lock ruled." It was here at New Orleans that Lincoln is supposed to have first seen the evils of the slave traffic and to have rebelled against it. A month gone, Lincoln avoided the difficult overland route of the early voyager and ascended the river on one of the numerous steamboats then plying the rivers.

STEAMBOATING ON THE ILLINOIS

Although steamboats were frequent on the Mississippi and Ohio between 1818 and 1830 they did not appear on the Illinois until 1828.

A local historian of Tazewell County describes in a humorous fashion the arrival of the first steamboat on the Illinois River: "The first steamboat to ascend the Illinois River landed at Pekin, which at that time was known from its fine location, as 'Town Site,' late in the fall of 1828. A steamboat was a novelty, or rather a mystery, to many of the early settlers. Coming up the river the boats passed Kingston in the night. Hugh Barr, who lived near that point, heard it coming, and being on rather unfriendly terms with the Indians, then quite numerous in the vicinity, concluded that it was some infernal contrivance of theirs to frighten or harm him. Seizing his gun and setting his equally bewildered dog at it, he pursued the offending mystery. The pilot, not being familiar with the channel, ran into Clifton's Lake, and finding no outlet, he had to back the boat out. Barr, witnessing this, drew off his dog, and though still hugely puzzled to know what manner of craft it was, gave up pursuit. William Haines, hearing the puff of the escaping steam, hastily left his bed, and half-dressed, crossed the street to Thomas Snell's, called neighbor Snell out of bed, and inquired as to what manner of creature was coming up the river. Snell replied: 'I don't know, Bill, but if I was on the Ohio River, I would think it was a steamboat.' Old Father Tharp, hearing the noise of the paddles, thought it was Gabriel blowing his horn; that sure enough the end of the world had come in the night; and calling up his household, engaged in prayer as a fitting preparation for the advent of a higher and better life."

In 1828 there were nine arrivals and departures at Naples. Increased immigration from the East starting in 1834 gave river commerce

an impetus which was to increase for half a century. Beginning with three steam craft running from St. Louis to Peoria in 1833, they increased steadily until 1852 there were 1,800 boats passing the Peoria Bridge. In 1850, 788 boats arrived at St. Louis from the Illinois River.

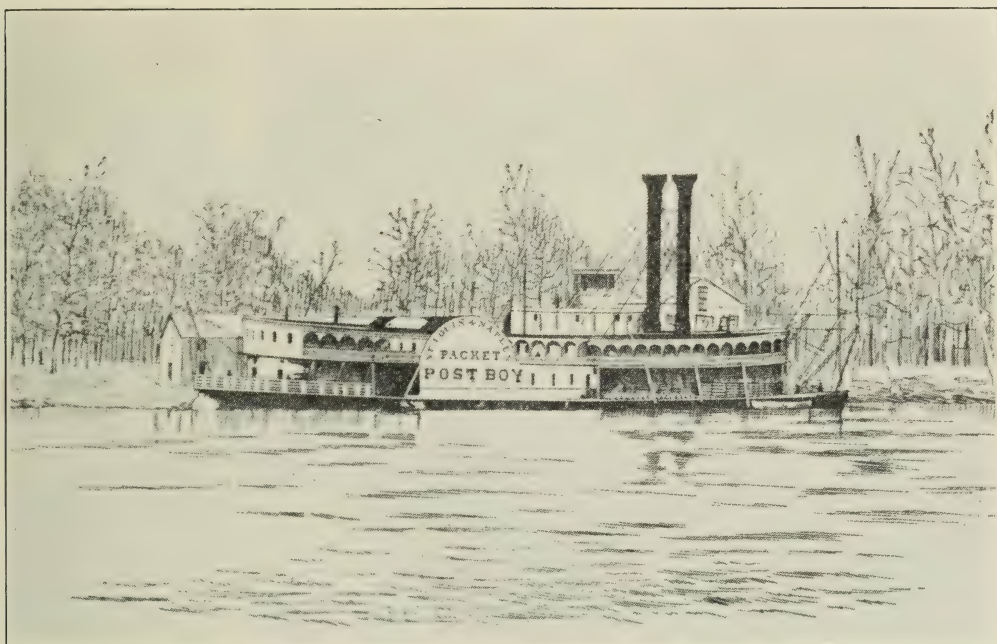
Not only were the steamboats piloted far up the Illinois but they also made their way up the smaller tributaries to the Illinois. Such a voyage by steamboat up the Sangamon River is depicted by Carl Sandberg in his "Life of Lincoln":

"In the winter of 1832, a steamboat was advertised to leave Cincinnati and sail on the four rivers necessary to reach New Salem by water route. Her name was classical, the *Talisman*; her owners hoped she had a magic charm. At the post office in New Salem, at the gristmill and the sawmill, at the wrestling matches, hoedowns, shindigs and chicken fights, the big talk was about that steamboat coming from Cincinnati. She had started down the Ohio going west, she had turned up the Mississippi running north, and in spite of fogs, rain and floating ice-jams, she had twisted into the channel of the Illinois River and arrived at Beardstown in April.

"As a sporting event it was interesting that she came through that far as a winner. As a business event it was important; after she turned into the Sangamon River and unloaded part of a cargo at Springfield, the stores there advertised arrival of goods 'direct from the East per steamer *Talisman*.' Storekeepers and land-buyers along the Sangamon were excited; if the steamer made all its connections and its plans worked out, then the Sangamon prairie valley would have direct water-route connections with Cincinnati and Pittsburgh; land and business values would go booming. It was a matter aside that the steamer captain, Bogue, had sent a dude captain to command the boat and this deck officer had worried the women of Springfield by bringing along a flashily-dressed woman not his wife, and both of them were drunk and loose-tongued at a reception and dance in the county courthouse tendered by the ladies and gentlemen of Springfield. * * *

"* * * She steamed up the river past New Salem, and tied up at Bogue's Mill. After the high waters of spring had gone down, making a narrower river and shallower channel, she started on her trip downstream. In charge as pilot the boat officers had put Abe Lincoln; he sat by and listened as the boat was stopped at the New Salem dam and the boat Officers quarreled with the dam owners, Cameron and Rutledge, about whether they could tear a hole so as to run the boat through. At last a rip was made through the dam, the boat made the passage downstream, and everybody concerned said it must happen never again."

The first steamboats on the Illinois were individually owned but later there was to grow up the packet companies which were fully incorporated under Illinois Law. The first packet company of the Illinois was organized in 1848 by E. W. Gould and C. S. Rogers of St. Louis, and Messrs. Mather, Lamb and Ridgely of Springfield, Illinois, and was called the Naples Packet Company. The boats of this line ran between St. Louis and



(Courtesy of Chicago Historical Society)

ST. LOUIS & NAPLES PACKET COMPANY'S STEAMER POST BOY



GOLDEN EAGLE PACKET, HAVANA
Still running on the Illinois River

Naples in connection with the Sangamon and Morgan Railroad between Springfield and Naples. The company at first ran two boats, the *Time and Tide* and the *Anthony Wayne*, both of which were light draft side-wheelers. Each boat made three trips a week from St. Louis. It soon became apparent that the trade would not support two boats and the *Anthony Wayne* was transferred to the upper Mississippi. The *Time and Tide* after several years of successful operation gave place to the *Niagara* and still later the *Cataract*. This line was very popular because it provided the only route, except by stage, from Springfield and the interior to St. Louis.

In 1852 the Five Day Line was organized to run between St. Louis and La Salle, the latter being the head of navigation on the Illinois River and the terminus of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. This line was a paying proposition because of the increasing travel between the East and the West, a large proportion of which selected the "lake route" from Buffalo to Chicago. This line was owned by individual companies and each boat was run on its owner's account. The boats engaged in this trade were some of the fastest of that day, among them were the *Garden City*, *Amazon*, *Cataract*, *Messenger*, *Prairie Bird*, *Belle Gould*, *Aunt Lettie*, and others.

With the installation of the five-day trip instead of the previous weekly trip the Naples Packet Company saw the need for speed and efficient service and joined in an effort to provide faster and better boats. Railroad competition destroyed the Five Day Line but the Naples packets continued to run because of their connection with the railroad which terminated at the river.

Attracted by the large profits to be made, another company, the Illinois River Packet Company, was organized in 1858. D. J. Hancock was president, William Mullen, secretary, and S. T. Belt, superintendent. The stock was made up by adding the valuation of the steamboats intended for the line. This company is thought to have been the strongest ever engaged in the Illinois River trade. It largely controlled the commerce of the Illinois until it sold out in 1867 to the St. Louis and Illinois River Packet Company of which F. S. Rogers was president. The increasing inability to meet the competition from the enemy of all water traffic, the railroad, and the increasing hazards of navigation in the Illinois River channel soon proved the downfall of this company as it had the former ones.

The period of steamboat supremacy on the western rivers was a colorful one. When the deep-throated whistle sounded the approach of a steamboat, towns along the river bank sprang from a state of apathy to one of intense activity and excitement. The coming of a brilliantly painted steamboat with its whistle blowing, bells jingling, and the twin

chimneys throwing up clouds of black smoke offered a welcome diversion to the quiet life of the river village. The whole town turned out to welcome the incoming boat and, as Mark Twain wrote, many were the envious glances cast by the village boys upon the boat crew. To become a river pilot was the ambition of every boy. Pilots were probably the most independent class of men in the West. No one, not even the captain or owner was permitted to give them orders. For their services they received as high as \$200 a week; which they spent almost as fast as they could get it. Their job was by no means a simple one for they had to know every snag, every shallow place, every turn in the river both by day and by night, and were forced to keep a lookout for changes in the rapidly-shifting river channel.

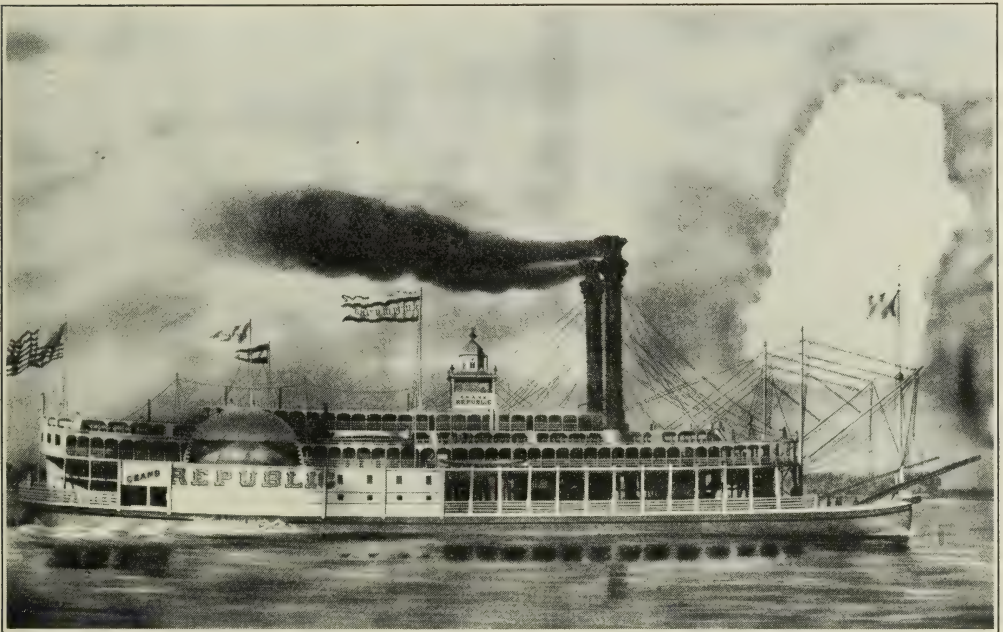
Although steamboat racing had to do with the drama rather than the economics of the river, it had a part in the steamboat traffic of every western watercourse. The picture of two boats racing down the river neck and neck, the funnels belching myriads of sparks and clouds of smoke, the safety valve sizzling, the captain calling orders and the sweat-begrimed fireman throwing wood and pitch on the fire to make it hotter was a sight never to be forgotten. The passengers of each boat crowded the rails and laughed, cursed, shouted at the other boat and bet their last dollars on the outcome of the race. The urge to win was so great that they often tied down the safety valve and ran the risk of an explosion. Racing was not altogether pure sport, for the boat which reached the desired port first had the pick of the unloading facilities and the outgoing cargo.

Capt. Samuel Rider was probably the most famous boatman and inventor on the Illinois River. In 1844 he built at Griggsville Landing a boat called the *Olitippa*. This boat was propelled by horse on an endless chain. There was no cabin or cargo box and the hold was too shallow to stow freight in. The cargo and crew were both on the main deck, since there was only one deck, and the chamber maid was dispensed with because of the few women who traveled on the Illinois at this early date. The *Olitippa* was a shallow-water boat with a draft of only ten inches; this proved advantageous on the Illinois but subjected her to the mercy of the swift Mississippi current and she was soon abandoned. Captain Rider next designed and constructed two steamboats which had successful careers. The first of these was called the *Timolian* and the second the *Prairie State*.

The average size of steamboats on the Illinois in 1851 was 275 tons. Beginning with an average speed of from six to eight miles an hour this was increased to twenty by 1860. For a long time the 297-mile trip from St. Louis to La Salle took from thirty-seven to forty-five hours,



CABIN OF THE GRAND REPUBLIC



THE GRAND REPUBLIC

The largest and most magnificent river boat ever built. St. Louis & New Orleans
Packet Line, Captain Thorwegan

but in 1854 the steamer *Cataract* and the steamer, *Garden City* made the trip in twenty-three hours and forty-five minutes.

The profits derived from the operation of river steamers were exceedingly high, but the initial cost was proportionately high. Not only were they costly because of material and labor but principally because their average life was only four or five years. Snags, bursting boilers and fire brought a sudden end to many a costly boat. Small boats of 100 tons and thirty-eight yards in length cost from \$7,000 to \$8,000 and larger boats cost about ninety-five dollars per ton. The average steamboat could carry 4,000 to 4,500 bushels of grain.

Wood was used in the early days to fire the boilers and each boat consumed one cord of wood every twenty-four hours for each twelve tons of weight. The banks of the Illinois were lined with wood yards where wood was obtained from one dollar and a half to five dollars per cord. The woods along the river which at first the farmers considered a hindrance, now proved an important source of income. The operating costs were divided as follows: thirty-six per cent for wages and thirty per cent for wood, eighteen per cent for provisions and sixteen per cent for contingencies.

Many of the early steamboats were very uncomfortable for tourists. A critical observer described an Illinois River steamboat in 1838 as follows: "There was but one bed room candlestick on board and this was made with one candle to serve the four ladies' staterooms in turn, one being obliged to go to bed, while the candle was then passed on to the next room. Of towels also there was but one, which had to go the round from cabin to cabin in the same way, and the whole equipment in furniture, fare and attendance was upon the same starved and miserable footing."

Jones, in his "Illinois and the West" June 20, 1838, describes travel on the Illinois in the following language:

"I arrived at Peoria, June 9, at three o'clock, A. M., in the steamboat *Ashley*, Captain Sweeney. This is a new boat and a regular packet, plying between St. Louis and Peru once a week each way. Capt. S. is a very affable, courteous and careful boat-master, keeping a vigilant eye on every department of his boat; now giving orders to the fireman, now the engineer, anon the pilot, and then the hands. I have never seen a man more devoted to his business, and in whose hands I would sooner trust myself as the master of a boat on the western waters. I had waited at Alton during forty-eight long, weary hours for a boat bound up the Illinois river—many had passed bound up the Mississippi and Missouri rivers—when at last, late in the evening, just as I was about to abandon my post of watching for the night, the *Ashley* made her appearance, crowded with passengers, and loaded to the guards with freight. Several passengers were waiting, like myself, and the appearance presented on going aboard, was poorly calculated to give us any idea

of comfort. We learned of course, that all the berths were long since taken up, and that we must take our chance with some sixty others at rough-and-tumble on the cabin floor. By a little management, and a bribe of a quarter-dollar to the steward—an important personage in such a case, and whose good will, once secured, well repays the cost—I obtained a snug corner, where with my saddle-bags for a pillow, I passed a tolerable night."

In contrast, however, some boats were richly furnished and set with deep windows. Printed rules of conduct were hung in conspicuous places. Gentlemen were forbidden to go to the table without coats or in any garb which would disturb the company. Neither should they enter the ladies' saloon without the consent of the ladies. Gentlemen were not to lie upon the beds with their boots on; they were not to smoke cigars in their stateroom; neither were they to play cards after ten o'clock, nor at any time engage in conversation with the pilot. Marking on the furniture was forbidden. Any transgression was punishable by a fine for the first offense and for the second the transgressor might be sent ashore. Each day, at noon, three persons to be chosen by a majority of the passengers formed a court to determine on all penalties incurred; and the amount collected was expended in wine for the whole company after dinner.

Professional gamblers inhabited the river steamers. Sometimes they worked in pairs and won by playing into each other's hand but more often they won through marked cards. A favorite trick was to bribe the saloon keeper into allowing them access to all the unsold decks. They would then mark each deck and reseal them. Later in the evening when a new deck was purchased the gambler was familiar with it. They also had the barkeeper fix them up bottles of colored water which they drank while their victims were consuming whiskey.

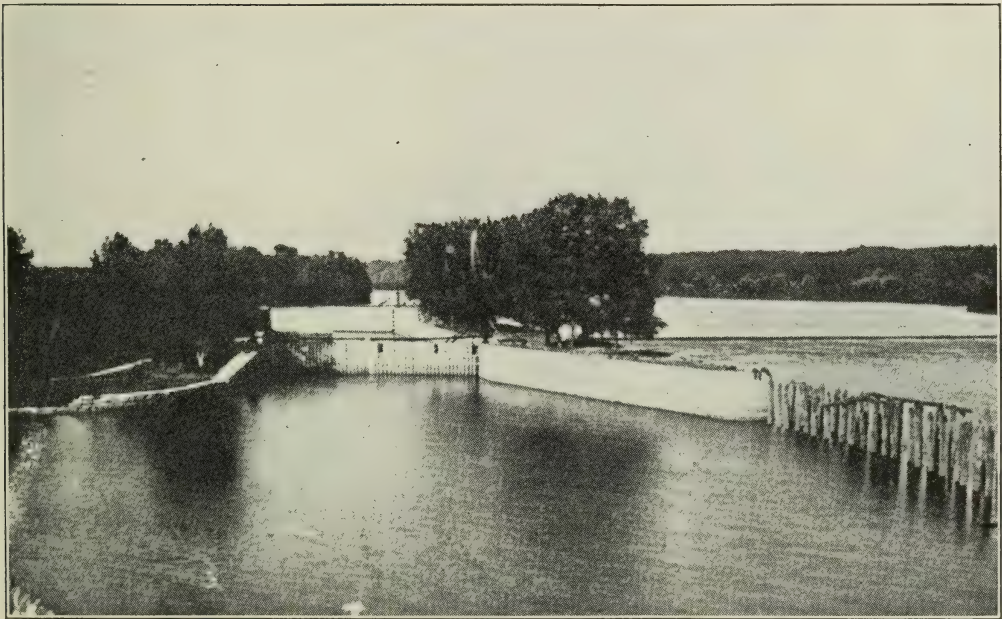
After the coming of the steamboat the Illinois flatboat men no longer followed the dangerous overland trail to their home; instead they took cheap deck passage on some ascending steamboat. Due to this fact, and to the absence of other modes of travel, the boats on the Mississippi and Illinois were nearly always crowded. These deck passengers numbered sometimes as high as 500 or 600 and occupied the lower deck where they found shelter, a bench on which to sleep, and for five or six dollars food enough to last them the entire trip. The transportation charges were partly paid by helping carry in wood at the wood yards. The lower deck which they occupied on going up the river was, on the return, often laden with horses and cattle.

Traveling by steamboat before 1850 was not only usually uncomfortable but was very dangerous. Due to poorly constructed boats, many



(Photo by J. L. Conger)

**TAKING AN ILLINOIS FARMER'S HERD OF HOGS
ON BOARD THE CAPE GIRARDEAU
FOR ST. LOUIS**



LOCK AND DAM, HENRY

One of the few locks in the Illinois River confronting the old time river pilot

were wrecked by exploding boilers. Fire on board and sand bars and snags in the river were also sources of frequent trouble, lacking any system of public inspection. Often boats known by the owner to be unsafe were used.

Competition was so keen among the boat captains that tricks would often be resorted to to entice the passengers aboard. A favorite deception consisted in circulating the report that the boat was leaving in an hour. The people who were in a hurry would rush aboard. This procedure would be kept up for as long as two days or until there was a sufficient load.

The Illinois River was closed a short time each year because of ice. This closed period ranged from two to four months. During the open season the navigation by steamboats, drawing from three to four feet of water, was seldom interrupted because of an insufficient water level. However, in 1838, the western streams were so low and the season, from June, so dry that steamboat shipping was almost entirely stopped after July 20.

There were many early obstacles to trade. Among these were scarcity of money, the want of business enterprise and the lack of any surplus due to the demands of the incoming immigrants. Another huge obstacle was the refusal of the farmers and producers to sell their produce on the current market. Rather they were inclined to hold it for a future high price.

Freight on the Illinois consisted mostly of non-perishable farm products such as corn, hogs, wheat, oats, barley, butter, wool, dry hide, pressed hay, beef cattle, sheep, etc. Coal, whiskey and manufactured shipments such as plows, fanning mills, doors, corn shellers, etc., were exported from Peoria. In 1851 Peoria exported 628,719 bushels of corn, 26,796 head of hogs, 151,415 bushels of wheat and 5,685 barrels of whiskey. A statement of the trade and commerce of St. Louis for the year 1850 showed that three-fifths of all the wheat taken into the St. Louis market came from the Illinois River. All grain was placed in sacks and handled by deck hands. The loading of a large steamer required days.

Freight rates as well as passenger rates were comparatively low. There were two types of passage for passengers, either deck or cabin passage. The deck passengers furnished their own provisions and bedding, and occupied the lower deck in the stern. By making partitions with blankets, families could have some degree of privacy. The following table shows the passenger rates, both deck and cabin, and freight rates from St. Louis to points on the Illinois River in 1839. Rates covering down-stream shipping were somewhat less.

	<i>Distance from St. Louis in miles</i>	<i>Cabin Passage</i>	<i>Deck</i>	<i>Freight per 100 lbs.</i>
From St. Louis to:				
Alton -----	26	\$1.50	\$1.00	\$.25
Grafton -----	42	2.00	1.00	.25
Bushnell's Landing -----	75	3.00	1.25	.25
Newport -----	81	3.00	1.25	.25
Montezuma -----	100	3.50	1.50	.25
Naples -----	118	4.00	1.50	.25
La Grange -----	133	4.50	1.50	.25
Beardstown -----	145	5.00	2.00	.37½
Copperas Creek -----	192	5.00	2.00	.37½
Pekin -----	212	6.00	2.50	.50
Peoria -----	223	6.00	2.50	.50
Lacon -----	256	6.50	2.50	.62½
Hennepin -----	282	7.00	3.00	.75
Peru -----	296	8.00	3.00	1.00
La Salle -----	297	8.00	3.00	1.00
Ottawa -----	312	8.00	3.00	1.00

In 1829 when the first steamboat arrived at Peoria, not a town existed on the river above. During the next seven years De Pue, Hennepin, Henry, Lacon and Chillicothe were all founded. Beardstown was an important center of trade in 1831 and by 1840 Newport, Bridgeport, Montezuma, Florence, Naples, Havana, Pekin, Peoria, Lacon, Hennepin, Peru, and Ottawa had come to the front. Peoria remained the most important port and city and in 1840 it contained twenty-five stores and 1,800 inhabitants.

THE CANAL AND THE RIVER

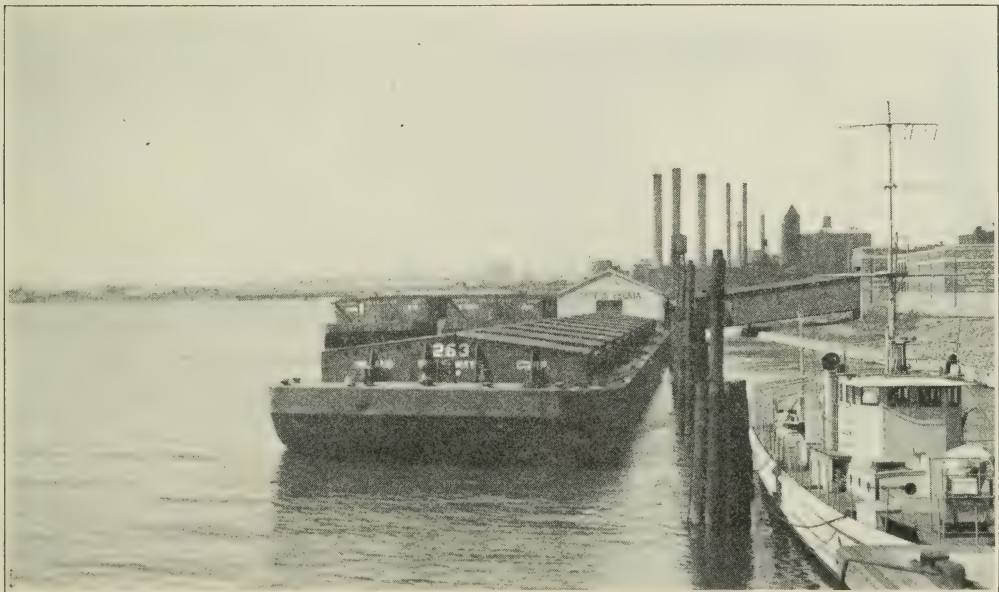
The opening of the Illinois and Michigan Canal in 1848 was to have profound effect on the importance of the Illinois. Because of this canal Chicago became the outlet for the northern farmers instead of St. Louis and New Orleans.

The influence of this canal may be divided into three periods. First was the period during the development of the project and the construction of the canal. The increasing probability of the early construction of the canal in the years 1830-1835 greatly increased the value of the land near the route and gave an impetus to rapid settlement. When construction was actually begun, land values jumped to untold heights.

The second period lasted from the opening of the canal in 1848 to 1854, the year of the opening of the Chicago & Rock Island Railroad, which paralleled and competed with the canal. A shortage of canal boats and an insufficient supply of water on the summit level were hindrances for several months after the opening.



A PRESENT DAY UNIT OF THE FEDERAL BARGE LINE NOW OPERATING
ON THE ILLINOIS RIVER



A FEDERAL BARGE LINE BOAT UNLOADING AT PEORIA
Showing the floating dock, City of Peoria, and escalator loading municipal dock with
its connecting railroad tracks. All freight is handled by power machinery

Chicago, Peoria and St. Louis were directly, though differently, affected by the canal. The opening of the canal in 1848 caused a decrease of 316,625 bushels of corn and 237,588 bushels of wheat at St. Louis. The cause for this shortage was the fact that the canal drew off to Chicago and to other points on the Lake the accustomed heavy arrivals from the Illinois River. Freight rates from the Illinois River to the eastern cities by way of Chicago and Buffalo were lower than those by way of St. Louis and New Orleans. St. Louis was compensated by an enlarged mercantile interest in the region whose rapid growth had been stimulated by the canal. The wholesale grocers found new markets for sugar, coffee, tobacco and other products from the lower Mississippi trade. However, eastern merchandise for which St. Louis was the distributing point for the regions west of the Mississippi River could be obtained more expeditiously and cheaply by way of the canal than by way of New Orleans.

The third period began with the opening of the Chicago & Rock Island Railroad for traffic in 1854. Passenger traffic and high class freight were the first to abandon the river for the railroad. Lumber, grain, coal and stone continued on the canal in large quantities for a number of years. The reduction of canal charges from time to time and a personal solicitation of freight by the boat owners together with the use of boats for storage when navigation was closed, caused the tonnage on the canal to increase till 1882, in which year the total freight carried was over 1,000,000 tons. Competition with the canal kept rates of the competing railroads much lower than the rates of those railroads which had no water competition.

The use of the canal was far from free. On freight carriers were lockage charges, a flat rate on the tonnage of the boat, as well as a classified scale of charges for the different commodities constituting the cargo. Boats transporting common freight were charged three and one-half cents per mile, those carrying coal three cents and those transporting passengers six cents. A toll of four mills per mile was charged on all passengers eight years old and upward, while each passenger was allowed sixty pounds of baggage. Classified toll rates on freight per 1,000 pounds ranged from one mill on coal to twenty-five mills on furs and peltries. The lockage rates ranged from one cent on sand to three cents on beans and corn.

Surprisingly, the canal showed a profit its first year. Profits continued to surpass expenses until in 1862 the canal showed a profit of over \$200,000. After 1879 the decrease in canal traffic lessened the income so greatly that the canal has operated at a loss ever since.

The ultimate loss of canal and river traffic was due to several causes. The first in point of time was the condition of the Illinois River. Not only was it closed by ice for a part of every year, but it also was too

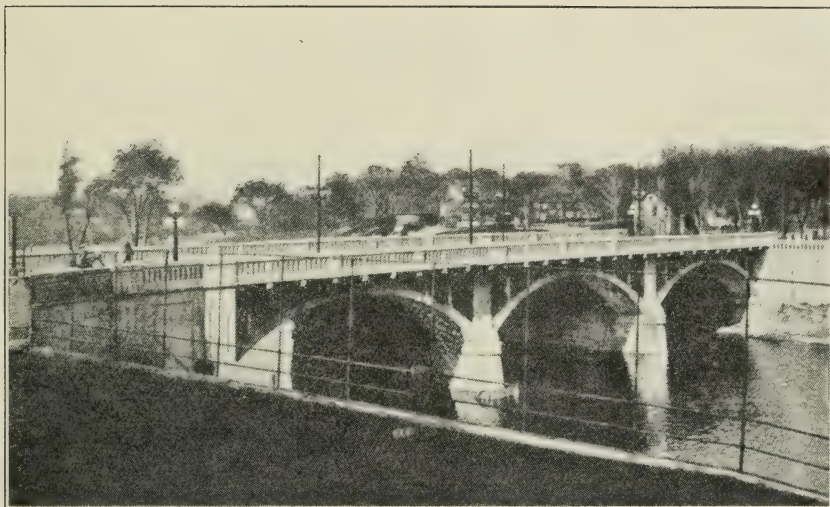
shallow in places for canal boats. Because the canal boats could not navigate the river they had to transfer their freight to river steamers at La Salle, thus causing delay and expense. Another cause for the decline was the rapid growth of the railroads. Water transportation was slow as compared with railroads and the branches and sidings made the railroad much handier. Then there were no common ownerships of canal and river boats and consequently no coöperation. Packets on the canal had no connected schedule with river steamers. Other minor causes of decline were the losses and expense acquired by steamboat companies because of bursting boilers, sandbars and snags. The facilities for loading and unloading were very crude and expensive since the wharfs had no power accommodations and all cargo transfer was done by hand.

The casual observer of 1880 might readily have said that the use of the Illinois River for shipping purposes was completely over. Indeed, it seemed so at that time, for the railroad was fast displacing the river boats. The colorful steamboat with its twin funnels had nearly disappeared. The above observer would have been correct had he referred only to the passenger steamboats. It is true that they are practically gone, and with them has passed the glory, the drama, and the color of the river traffic. No more does one hear the musical whistle and bells of the gaily-colored packet boats. Instead he hears the low moan of the tug as it moves up and down the river, pushing before it many barges loaded with thousands of tons of freight.

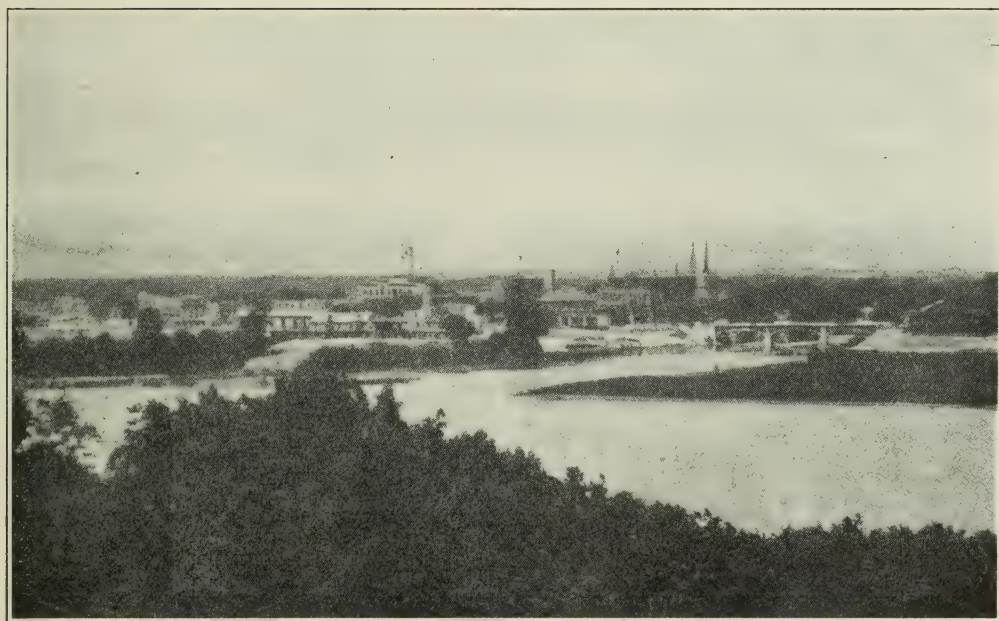
With the completion of the new Federal nine-foot channel which extends from Lake Michigan to the Gulf of Mexico, the Illinois River will regain its former importance as a freight highway. Shipping by water always has and always will be cheaper than by land. With no cost for expensive tracks, right-of-way or upkeep, the river tugboat can push barges to New Orleans loaded with as much heavy non-perishable freight as would fill many railroad trains and at the same time do it a great deal cheaper.

Already cities along the river are awakening to the new era of river traffic. Peoria has taken the lead among the river ports and has installed the latest type of unloading machinery and storehouse. The freight handled on the river in the past is only a fraction of the tonnage which will soon pass over the Illinois.

No longer must the Illinois look back to its glorious past, instead it can look steadily forward to an ever-increasingly important future.



FOX RIVER BRIDGE, OTTAWA



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW SHOWING WHERE ILLINOIS AND FOX RIVERS MEET,
OTTAWA

CHAPTER X

THE ILLINOIS AND MICHIGAN CANAL

Louis Joliet of the renowned exploring team of Marquette and Joliet, making a report of his exploration of the Mississippi and Illinois rivers, said:

"The fourth remark concerns a very important advantage which some will, perhaps, find it hard to credit; it is that we can quite easily go to Florida in boats and by a very good navigation. There would be only one canal to make by cutting only a half league of prairie to pass from the Lake of Illinois (Lake Michigan) into the St. Louis River (the Des Plaines and Illinois). The route to be taken is this: The bark should be built on Lake Erie which is near Lake Ontario. It would pass from Lake Erie to Lake Huron, from which it would enter the Lake of Illinois. At the extremity of this would be the cut or canal, of which I have spoken, to have a passage to the St. Louis River which empties into the Mississippi.

"The bark having entered the Mississippi would easily sail to the Gulf of Mexico."

And such is the first recorded reference to the Illinois and Michigan Canal. Joliet's letter was dated in the fall of 1673. Other explorers in the "New France" of that day held similar ideas. They realized at a glance the importance, to the huge French territory extending from Canada to the Gulf, of a continuous north and south waterway binding together that extensive territory for His French Majesty. There was something in the idea, in the very grandeur of it, which stirred the imagination of those old Frenchmen. It stirred the imagination of numerous other men—statesmen, soldiers, empire builders,—from that time on down to a day in 1848 when the canal was finished.

Nearly two centuries thus intervened between those dates, and many and varied changes had taken place. France had long been superseded by England as the chief power in North America, and England by the new United States. The question of cutting a ditch through the Chicago Portage, that narrow strip of land at the foot of Lake Michigan, and digging a canal from there on southward to the Illinois, came up again and again, although for nearly 130 years after Joliet it lay dormant. Then in 1810 Peter B. Porter, Congressman from New York, made a

reference to it though it seems to have gone no further at the time. Four years later *Niles' Register* (August 6, 1814) repeats in substance what Joliet said so long before:

By the Illinois River it is probable that Buffalo in New York may be united with New Orleans by inland navigation through Lakes Huron and Michigan and down that river to the Mississippi. What a route! How stupendous the idea! How dwindles the importance of the artificial canals of Europe compared to *this* water communication. If it should ever take place (and it is said the opening may be easily made) the territory (of Illinois) will become the seat of an immense commerce and the market for commodities of all regions."

But this foreshadowing of the future greatness of Illinois went no further than words. The idea slept for another two years. With the exception of a few river settlements the West and the Southwest were still a wild, undeveloped country.

The first real step towards the building of the Illinois and Michigan Canal was taken in 1816 when, by a treaty with the Pottawatomies, signed at St. Louis, August 25 of that year, the United States acquired from that Indian tribe the title to a strip of land twenty miles wide from Ottawa to Chicago covering the navigable route of the Illinois and Des Plaines rivers and the portage of the Chicago River.

Maj. H. S. Long of the United States Army Engineers very shortly thereafter made his famous trip over the route of the Canal—"a route leading," as he says, "through a savage and roadless wilderness via Fort Clark and the Valley of the Illinois to Lake Michigan." In June, 1823, Major Long returned to the Illinois Country. He has this to say, among other things, of his visit to that now famous portage at the foot of the Lake:

"The south fork of the Chicago River takes its rise about six miles from the fort (Fort Dearborn) in a swamp which communicates also with the Des Plaines, one of the head branches of the Illinois." It was on this trip that Long observed for the first time the interesting "division of the waters * * * starting from the same swamp and running in two different directions so as to become feeders of streams that discharge themselves into the ocean an immense distance apart." * * *

Continues Long: "We are led irresistibly to the conclusion that an elevation of the lakes of a few feet, not exceeding ten or twelve, above their present level would cause them to discharge their waters, partly at least, into the Gulf of Mexico; that such a discharge has at one time actually existed, everyone conversant with the nature of the country must admit; and it is equally apparent that an expenditure, trifling in compari-

son with the importance of the object, would again render Lake Michigan a tributary of the Mexican Gulf."

The result of Major Long's survey was that he recommended, March 4, 1817, a canal from the Chicago River to the Des Plaines with a lock at each end and supplied with waters from the Des Plaines. Another report made by R. Graham and Joseph Phillips proposed a lake-fed canal cut deep enough across the Valparaiso Moraine, which forms the divide, to permit the flow from lake to river farther to the southwest than Long had proposed.

Meanwhile the astute John C. Calhoun, enthusiastic supporter of internal improvements, had become Secretary of War and he at once submitted to the House of Representatives a systematic plan for a system of roads and canals, the construction of which would be of military importance in the defense of the country. He advocated a water communication from Pittsburgh to Lake Erie, a road from Detroit to the Ohio, and a canal from the Illinois River to Lake Michigan.

On the same day that the House of Representatives requested Calhoun to make his report on a plan for internal improvements, the bill for the admission of Illinois to the Union was amended so as to take in the new port of Chicago. "The amendment was made" according to Putnam, "with the evident expectation that Illinois would become interested in the new waterway."

"Nor was this expectation unfulfilled. In his inaugural message, Shadrach Bond, first Governor of Illinois, expressed the conviction that the canal would be of great importance to the state in conjunction with the Erie Canal then in the process of construction."

Two surveys were made in the autumn of 1823 and 1824 by Col. Justus Post, Chief Engineer of Missouri, and René Paul of St. Louis. Five different routes were surveyed, and an estimate made on each. The highest estimate was \$716,110 and the lowest \$659,946.

The plan of construction decided on was on the scale of the New York and Erie Canal. The dimensions of the canal were to be such as would admit the passage of boats thirteen and a half feet wide and drawing three feet of water. The toll was placed at one half cent per mile per ton.

But the Canal Association did not succeed in organizing a working company. So the Legislature of 1826 annulled the act of the previous year. It was stated that this action was not intended to be an abandonment of the canal project, but simply a move to clear away all "entangling alliances" and enable future managers of the canal to build their work upon a new basis.

Congress was memorialized for another grant of land, the first grant having been for only ninety feet on each side the shores of the canal. In this connection, Governor Coles explained that due to the fluctuation

of the then money market it was next to impossible to obtain a money loan anywhere on long time.

The Canal had good friends at Court—such men as Congressman Daniel P. Cook, and Senators J. B. Thomas, Ninian Edwards and Elias Kane, through whose efforts an act was passed, March 2, 1827, granting to the State of Illinois, for canal purposes a “quantity of land equal to one half of five sections in width on each side of the proposed route, each alternate section being reserved to the National Government.”

Congress, thus impressed with the importance of the canal, turned over to the State of Illinois 284,000 acres of land. Something more than a third of it was fertile prairie. Not only did this fine land grant from the government make the building of the canal a certainty, it was the means years later of saving the state from financial disaster. It was responsible for the laying out and building of a young city near the foot of Lake Michigan which has since grown to be the second largest in the United States. Other flourishing towns were built along the proposed route of the Canal.

The first Canal Commissioners were Dr. Jayne of Springfield, Edmund Roberts of Kaskaskia and Charles Dunn, who proceeded at once to lay out towns at each end of the route. Ottawa was first platted, at the juncture of the Fox and Illinois rivers.

The other town was Chicago at the lake end of the route. Chicago thus owes its existence, in large measure at least, to the Illinois and Michigan Canal.

Taking the land grant as a basis, the State of Illinois began to plan for definite action regarding the long delayed project. But numerous unseen difficulties lay ahead. It must have seemed to those early backers of the Illinois and Michigan Canal idea, that some unkind fate was stalking their footsteps bent upon frustrating the best of their endeavors.

But they went ahead. A new Canal Commission was appointed in 1829 and—about the same time as the towns of Ottawa and Chicago were laid out—the first sale of town lots took place. The hopes of the Canal's friends soared high once more. But again disappointment awaited them. The financial problem had not yet been solved. The land sales proved disappointing. During 1830 the total amount realized from the sale of canal lands was \$18,914. The lands were sold in half, quarter, and fractional sections.

The reason for these poor sales is easily explained. There was an abundance of other purchasable public lands more favorably situated with reference to transportation facilities. Therefore, men hesitated at that period to invest in canal lands until convinced that the building of the Canal would not be further delayed. They were far from certain of this in 1830.



ILLINOIS RIVER BRIDGE, MORRIS



HENRY BRIDGE, HENRY

Meanwhile, Congress was petitioned for further assistance. But on January 5, 1831, the House of Representatives refused by a substantial majority to take back the unsold portion of the donated lands and issue scrip in the amount of \$1.25 an acre for it, the scrip to be used in payment for the construction of the Canal and to be receivable at the government land office in payment for public land.

Turning elsewhere, the Board of Canal Commissioners sent J. H. Pugh, its president, to the eastern cities to try to float a loan, but the best proposition he could secure was for a loan to the State for a term of fifteen years with interest at the rate of five per cent. This proposal was not acceptable.

More trouble was in the offing. About this time there was arising in the minds of Americans, the idea that the railroads were their destined means of transportation. Beginning with the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in 1829, rail lines were being constructed in various parts of the East, and in this same year of 1831 the New York Central's first train had run creakingly and gruntingly over the seventeen miles between Albany and Schenectady, in New York, almost within sight of the busy highway of the Erie Canal, bearing well laden canal boats of passengers and freight.

The friends of the canal went on with their labors to bring about realization of the water connection between the Lakes and the Mississippi—the Canal.

And what was this grand new waterway to be like? We may smile, many of us, as we read its dimensions. It was to be 40 feet wide at the summit water level, narrowing to twenty-eight feet at the bottom, and having a minimum depth of four feet. There were no steam shovels in those days. Men with picks, hand shovels, spades and axes did all the work. One may see today the remnant of the old Illinois and Michigan Canal—that part which has not been filled up with refuse and dirt—and comparing it with that big, near-by new deep channel, the Lakes to Gulf Waterway, which parallels it and its lineal descendant, so to speak, may wonder how so small a channel could accommodate a sizable traffic. Yet the old Canal did bear a huge commerce as may be seen shortly.

The railroad fever was spreading westward, over the Blue Ridge and the Alleghanies. Shortly the question arose as to whether a railroad between the Des Plaines and the Illinois would not be more satisfactory than a canal. The Canal Commissioners, themselves, caught the idea. James M. Bucklin, chief engineer for the Canal Commission, estimated that a canal supplied with water from Lake Michigan would cost \$4,107,440, while a shallow cut canal with the summit level elevated eight feet above the level of Lake Michigan and receiving its water supply from

the Ausogonaskki Reservoir and the Des Plaines River could be constructed for \$1,601,895.

But he added that a railroad could be built for \$1,052,488. Whereupon, in their report to the General Assembly of Illinois, the Canal Commissioners who had been fighting for a canal for the past several years, did a complete right about and recommended that a railroad be built instead of the canal.

But despite the various arguments in favor of a railroad, the canal idea persisted. A connection between the Lakes and the Illinois River was daily becoming more imperative. The trend of immigration was setting in that direction. Chicago, within four years of the sale of its first lots, had grown to be a husky young village of 1,200 people. Already the town had begun to lay the foundation of its future greatness but it was in sore need of better facilities for carrying on commercial intercourse with the interior. "And the interior," says the historian, Putnam, "was in even greater need of the benefit a canal would bring."

There were scattered but growing settlements between Chicago and the Illinois River which were now dependent entirely on slow and expensive overland transportation for the sale of their products and the purchase of their merchandise.

The Canal, providing cheap and direct transportation, would promote the industrial development of the region by giving a better market for its products and by diminishing the cost of its imports. This in turn would increase rents and property values. But that was not all. The canal would have much more than a local significance. It would reduce the price of New York merchandise to all the region beyond Chicago located near a navigable stream. It would increase the price of farm products. Since the building of the Erie Canal there was provided an excellent working route between the Lakes and the Atlantic Seaboard. Going a step further and building the Illinois and Michigan Canal, would provide the means of bringing into direct connection, the Atlantic seaboard, the Middle West and the South. Steamboats were even that early plying the placid Illinois River as far up as Peoria and could easily extend their operations to La Salle. Governor Duncan, in his enthusiasm, even suggested that steamboats be put on the Canal as well as on the river.

General Charles Gratiot, Chief of Engineers, U. S. Army, discussing the relative merits of a canal and a railroad, summed the matter up briefly in these words:

"There would seem to be, in a position such as this, and to accomplish objects so vast, no question as to which of the usual means, railroad or canal, should be resorted to. The exclusive character of the first; the repeated handling of the commodities transported over it, always attended with expense; the complication of machinery, and the consequent lia-

bility to accident and detention, as well as the principle of rapid decay, inseparable from the materials used in its construction, seem to offer to my mind objections not to be overcome.

"A canal, on the contrary, would afford facilities commensurate with the great thoroughfares it would connect, and the vast amount of produce afloat upon them during the greater portion of the year, or in waiting upon their shores."

Things now commenced to move along in earnest. In June, 1834, the Committee on Roads and Canals reported to the House of Representatives in favor of the building of a canal of sufficient size and depth to accommodate not only the regular canal boats but steamboats as well, both lake and river craft, without unloading.

Nearly twenty years passed after the grant of canal lands had been obtained from the Pottawatomies before the dirt commenced to fly. July 4, 1836, was a gala day in Chicago. An enthusiastic populace was on hand to witness the actual beginning of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. With speeches, cannon-firing and huzzas, those early Chicagoans saw Acting Commissioner Archer turn the first shovel of earth feeling, doubtless, that after their manifold trials and uncertainties the way of building the canal was clear before them. But they soon found they had passed only the first line of obstacles.

Almost at once the question of financing the undertaking arose again. The first estimate of cost, of less than a million dollars, was soon found to be totally inadequate to carry the work forward to any great extent. Engineer James M. Bucklin next set the figure at something more than \$4,000,000. And this enormous figure was shortly found to be too small. Ex-Governor Coles went to New York and renewed his efforts to obtain a loan. But even with the faith of the State of Illinois pledged, he was unable to negotiate with the bankers of New York or Philadelphia or with the agents of the Rothschilds.

Some of the Eastern financiers did say, however, that they thought the loan would eventually be a safe one because, by giving to Illinois both an eastern and southern seaport connection, the Canal would lead to such an economic development of the region as greatly to enhance the value of canal lands. But no provision was made for the payment of the interest should the sale of land and lots fail to provide the needful amount.

A committee from the State Legislature estimated that a lake-fed canal such as was planned would cost in the neighborhood of \$13,000,000. This same committee proposed that a shallow cut canal be built, after all, on the summit level; that the canal should terminate at Lake Joliet, slack water navigation being provided from that point by means of locks and dams in the Des Plaines River.

The Canal Board was reorganized. Another engineer, Benjamin

Wright of New York was to re-examine the route of the canal and give the General Assembly expert opinion as to what course to follow in constructing it. He commended the work the Canal Commissioners were doing and urged pushing it to a rapid conclusion.

Next in order, came the terrible panic of 1837 tending still further to embarrass the activities of the Canal Commissioners and the progress of the work, although the first half of 1837 had looked very hopeful for the affairs of the Canal. A Legislative Act of January 9, 1836, had made canal bonds marketable securities. Governor Duncan negotiated a loan in New York, under these conditions, of \$500,000. Three hundred and seventy-five lots were sold in Chicago in June, 1836, for more than a million and a quarter. And a few months later Ottawa followed suit with the sale of seventy-eight lots, which sale was in excess of more than \$2,000 above the appraised value.

The State Bank which held nearly \$400,000 of canal funds, about this time, suspended specie payments indefinitely. But proceeding on a hand-to-mouth basis, the Canal was growing a little at a time with each passing month. "And, although the sudden increase of a transient population and the consequent enlarged demand for materials and provisions in this undeveloped region," says Putnam, "added materially to the financial burden of the contractors, the work was carried forward with such vigor that by the close of Governor Duncan's administration in December, 1838, the entire line of the Canal was under contract except about twenty-three miles of the route between Dresden and Marseilles. Several sections of the western division were complete and others approaching completion. The state had thus far expended nearly a million and a half dollars on the project.

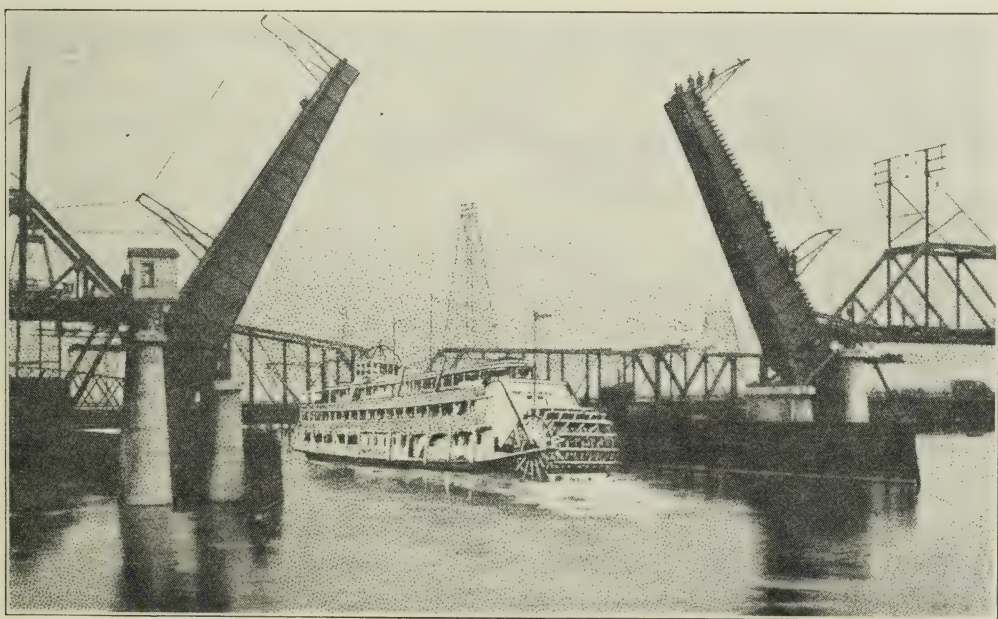
The canal fund was *in the red* \$208,000. To meet this deficit the Canal Board tried to sell \$500,000 state bonds but was unsuccessful. Whereupon, an arrangement was made with the State Bank of Illinois to furnish the necessary funds to carry on the work on the new waterway for the remainder of the year, 1839.

By the dawn of the year, 1840, the Canal's treasury was once more empty and the Commissioners were forced to give the contractors doing the work checks dated ahead and bearing interest at six per cent.

The year 1841, also, found the canal funds at a low ebb, though the contractors continued their work hoping the General Assembly would be able to devise some means to carry the work forward. But the General Assembly was unequal to the occasion, and its failure to provide further means for the continuance of the work was interpreted as the abandonment of the Canal to its fate. As many of the contractors as were able to "get out from under" without too great a loss to themselves, did so.



VIEW ON THE ILLINOIS RIVER AT THE FOOT OF COURT STREET, PEKIN



McKINLEY BRIDGE, PEORIA

Others continued for a time but reduced their forces as rapidly as conditions would warrant. With the failure of the State Bank in February, 1842, the financial affairs of the state seemed in a hopeless condition. The state owed nearly \$14,000,000; and the debt was increasing at the rate of \$800,000 a year in interest. In June of the same year (1842) the state's bonds sold in a public auction in Chicago at less than twenty-five cents on the dollar. The bills of the defunct State Bank brought in slightly in excess of thirty-eight cents on the dollar.

A policy of repudiation was for a time openly advocated.

And now the state turned to the Canal for assistance. Says Putnam: "A completed canal would aid the state finances both directly and indirectly. It would give direct aid by yielding a revenue which would offset a portion of the interest charges the state was then unable to meet. Indirectly, it would bring larger revenues to the treasury by increasing the basis of taxation: first, by the raising of property values by the capitalization of the diminution in transportation charges; and, secondly, by making the state a more attractive place for settlement and investment through this provision for lightening its financial burdens, which would tend to draw the population and capital that naturally shun a debt-ridden community and its exorbitant taxes."

In short, the state officials summed it up by saying, in effect, that the difference between a completed and an uncompleted canal means the difference between a solvent and an insolvent state.

There was no lack of desire on the part of the state officials to rush the canal through to a finish. There was only one thing that stood in the way: an item of \$3,000,000 necessary to pay the contractors to finish digging the canal on the deep cut plan, as started. But there was not, in the state's present depleted condition, \$3,000,000 to be had.

Once more the friends of the Canal turned to the old shallow cut plan, which, it was estimated, could be put through for \$1,600,000 by pledging the Canal, the Canal lands and the Canal revenues! The principal holders of Canal bonds in New York looked upon the plan as feasible. So the governor was authorized to float a loan for the amount and to secure its payment by a deed of trust. The Canal and all its property were turned over to three trustees, one an appointee of the governor and two chosen by subscribers to the new loan. The trustees were authorized to hold and manage the Canal for the benefit of the creditors under such restrictions as would safeguard the interests of the state.

The Act of February, 1843, required the completion of the Canal within three years. And despite all the manifold delays incident to this final arrangement for funds to complete the enterprise; despite the deterioration of unfinished work on the Canal, the unusual amount of sick-

ness among the laborers, floods, and various other hindrances, the work was completed within the allotted time. It was not, however, opened to traffic until April, 1848. * * *

EFFECTS OF CANAL

Even before work on the Canal had begun, its influence was being felt in the region through which it passes. During the period of its building it exerted an even greater influence. By 1830-35 people in the region along the Canal route, feeling certain now that an adequate water highway would be provided for them which would greatly increase the value of property contiguous to the Canal, began to buy Canal lands extensively.

Population in the towns and cities along the line between the Lake and the Illinois River increased rapidly as the Canal became a certainty. The increase in that area during those same five years, 1830 to 1835, was 20,000; while during the next five years, Chicago at the northern end of the Canal experienced a vast impetus, mounting to 20,000 by the time the Canal had finished building. By 1850 there were 125,000 people in Chicago.

With the completion of the Canal in 1848, traffic commenced almost at once. With appropriate ceremonies Chicagoans celebrated the opening of the new waterway in April, 1848. The first boat through was the *General Fry*, convoyed by a propeller boat; though the main dependence for traffic was to be upon the towpath which paralleled the Canal. The *General Fry* passed over the summit level from Lockport to Chicago; not until April, 23d did a boat, the *General Thornton*, negotiate the full length of the Canal.

Canal traffic increased steadily, although it was hindered somewhat by insufficient water supply on the summit level and at times in the Illinois River which the canal traffic used a portion of the way, the Calumet feeder not being completed and it being necessary to pump water from the Chicago River at Bridgeport. Another cause for the traffic not being as much as under other circumstances it would have been, was the lack of canal boats to carry the commodities and passengers seeking transportation. At the time of the opening only sixteen canal boats were in commission for service. Shortly a larger number were caring for an increasing commerce.

Lumber came in great quantities from the Great Lakes. General merchandise from the East which had come via Buffalo passed down the Canal for distribution to the cities, towns and farms which bordered the Canal or the Illinois River, and from them were sent to the isolated interior settlements. Coming north, farm products from the Canal country, and sugar, molasses and coffee from New Orleans and St. Louis

markets moved to Chicago via the Canal on their way to northern and eastern points.

This through traffic was mounting up into huge figures. In 1851, 44,000,000 feet of lumber, 47,000,000 shingles and 11,000,000 lath moved out by water from Chicago to points beyond the western terminus of the Canal; and most of the more than 3,000,000 bushels of corn received that year in Chicago, according to Putnam, came on the canal boats.

The Canal as a transportation route vitally affected St. Louis, Peoria, and Chicago. St. Louis was the only one of the three to feel this effect adversely, since before the building of the Canal all the Illinois River trade was tributary to St. Louis and moved over her wharves; but since the opening of the Canal most of it became tributary to Chicago; St. Louis, however, still held her supremacy in the matter of products from the South.

There is extant a very early photograph of the Chicago end of the Illinois and Michigan Canal, showing more than a hundred boats on the Canal's bosom at Chicago. There was need for every one of them in the early 'fifties.

On the Illinois River, meanwhile, traffic was booming. Due to the Canal business, a line of fine steamboats was organized to care for the added traffic and to run from St. Louis to La Salle, the head of navigation and terminus of the Canal. This steamboat organization was known as the Five Day Line because the boats composing it made the round trip in five days instead of the hitherto customary one week. By this time (1852) the Canal had become a favorite route for passengers, both through and local, as well as freight. A line of very good canal boats, designed especially for passengers, plied regularly. These boats were fitted up in a style that met the needs of discriminating travelers of that day. Each boat had from seventy-five to one hundred sleeping berths, and while not capacious, they were a vast improvement over contemporary stagecoach method of travel. Moreover, their meals were proverbially good. The combination of the Five Day Line of Steamboats and the canal boats won great favor among through passengers between the East and West.

The year 1854 held sinister portents for the Canal. For in that year the Rock Island Railroad was opened for traffic from Chicago to Rock Island, Illinois. And immediately the same conditions that existed elsewhere along rivers and canals manifested themselves in the I. & M. territory. The Rock Island road was planned as a feeder for canal traffic in the hope that it would develop the region between the two rivers by tapping the upper Mississippi trade and drawing it to Chicago through the Canal. In 1851, however, the railroad had been granted an amended charter authorizing its extension to Chicago. Another line reached from

Rock Island to Peoria. Thus, before the end of the summer of 1854 the Canal was in competition with the railroad which had been built as an auxiliary to the water route. The contest for business began at once, with the Canal on the losing side.

The passenger business was the first to go—as has been the case with every similar unequal contest between the railroads and steamboat lines on Western waters. Within a few months of the opening of the Rock Island Railroad, the Canal was transporting such freight as the railroad would not bother with. From that time on the story of the Illinois and Michigan Canal has been one of decreasing business, of gradual sinking into disuse until today—on such stretches of it as are still in operation—traffic is practically non-existent.

Although the I. & M. Channel was nominally completed in 1848, the dream of its planners and builders back there in the early days of the nineteenth century will not see its full realization until 1933.

In that year the latest phase of the work will be completed. The Lakes-to-Gulf Waterway will then have been finished, providing a deep nine foot channel, 200 feet wide, from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. Chicago will be virtually a river steamboat port. Steamboat whistles will be heard at the docks of the Windy City. In place of the slow moving but picturesque canal boats which carried the traffic of the old Canal, modern steel sternwheel and Deisel propeller towboats will convoy great tows of steel barges, each carrying a thousand tons of freight, over the entire waterway from Chicago to New Orleans and to the upper Mississippi ports.

Not alone was the little Canal of 1848 intended to be merely a water road across the State of Illinois connecting the Mississippi with the Lakes; not alone was it meant to have a local significance in the transportation picture of America. Even before it was completed it had commenced to wield an influence over a wide range of territory by means of the added facilities which it furnished as a transportation route, before the era of railroads had been ushered in.

Since the railroads have come to the Middle West it has served also as a freight-rate regulator at all competitive points. And there are those who claim that, as a result of the modern activity on the rivers today and the present new equipment and adequate river channels, a part of traffic which went to the railroads at the end of the Canal and steamboat eras, will return to the water courses.

Already a start has been made in that direction. At the numerous river ports between the North and the South modern river-rail terminals have been or are being constructed for the accommodation both of river barges and railroad cars, so that transfer may be made easily and quickly in the most approved method. Shipment by barge on the rivers repre-

sents a saving of twenty per cent to the shipper. The barge lines do a good business!

Since 1924, the Federal Barge Line, backed by the War Department, has been serving the Western River communities as an efficient common carrier. This organization has been responsible for bringing to the rivers additional barge lines, financed entirely by private capital, which give adequate freight connection to Louisville, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh and the cities of the Mississippi. And just as soon as the Lakes to Gulf Waterway (outgrowth of the old I. & M. Canal) is done, Chicago and the other Lake ports as well as Illinois River ports will share the advantage of through water transportation such as was envisioned for the Middle West by the builders of the Illinois and Michigan Canal.

CHAPTER XI

THE ILLINOIS AND MISSISSIPPI, OR HENNEPIN CANAL

Before the Civil war practically all transportation of any volume or bulk was water. The railroad was still very much an experiment. Consequently when there was any thought of improving means of transportation it was of ships, of barges, of new and shorter routes, and hence of canals. Everyone knew what a success the Erie Canal was. So there was almost an epidemic of canal building—or rather of proposals for canal building.

In Illinois, the Illinois and Michigan Canal was a part of this move. It was a State project with the ostensible purpose of making a through-water route from the Lakes to the Gulf by way of the Illinois and Mississippi rivers. It is true that Chicago expected to use it for drainage purposes, also to take waste away from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico. Proponents of water transportation claimed that it was always a great success while opponents said that it was never a success. It seems that as is usually the case neither was wholly right or wrong. In its first year it was very successful but thereafter it became decreasingly popular until it reached the stage where it did little more than break even. It would be easy, however, to find an excuse for the decrease, for the canal was in no way adequate nor large enough for a large volume of traffic. At any rate, this canal was finished in 1848, a few years before the railroads began their rapid and steady development.

Shortly after the Illinois and Michigan Canal began to be discussed, the suggestion came up that the canal should extend to the Mississippi River at or near Rock Island instead of proceeding by way of the Illinois River. Greater convenience for the northwestern states was the chief point in favor of the variation. The project at first did not find a sufficiently favorable following to make headway. But the possibility was by no means forgotten. In fact, certain individuals began to envision a nation-wide system of connected and interlacing waterways. They felt that the Illinois and Michigan Canal and the Illinois River route ought to be a part of the system but they felt that the canal connecting the Northwest would be an equally valuable adjunct. Hence they began to agitate for the improvement in Congress, in the State Legislature of Illinois (where the idea first received practical consideration), in public meetings and at conventions, and in the newspapers, particularly.

AGITATION FOR CANAL BEGINS

Although it had been discussed privately since 1836, the earliest public endorsement of such a project came in a resolution by a waterways convention at Memphis, Tennessee, presided over by John C. Calhoun, which declared that the "project of connecting the Mississippi River with the Lakes of the North by canal and thus with the Atlantic Ocean, is a measure worthy of the enlightened consideration of Congress." This convention met in 1845.

Most of the organizations for the promotion of the Canal were in the vicinity of its proposed route, however. Although they argued that other sections of the country would be benefited as much as or more than Illinois, most of the leaders of the agitation, in public life particularly, were from this State.

From the time of the Memphis Convention on to 1860 there seems to have been very little agitation. There was more concern over the issues that led to the Civil war. The matter of a little canal in Illinois did not seem important enough for consideration compared to the great controversial issues of the day. It is true, that in those days the national government was not considered the agency for the development of such projects.

During the course of the Civil war the canal continued to be discussed only spasmodically. With the war taking all available resources, there was no hope of building a canal that had purely commercial reasons back of it. But in 1862 there developed a new angle. England had been none too friendly to the Northern cause at any time during the war. In fact, relations had become so strained that war with that power also was not at all a remote possibility. In 1817, England and the United States had made an agreement that neither would put any warships on the Lakes without giving six weeks notice of a desire to abrogate the treaty. Now England had built the St. Lawrence and Welland canals so that if the occasion should arise she could easily transport any number of ships to the Lakes in a short time. At the present time the United States enjoyed no such advantage. She was forced to build her lake ships on the lake shores. There was no means of bringing them there from elsewhere. For in the event of a break with England, the only water outlet to the ocean through the St. Lawrence River would be cut off. Consequently, the opening of a water entrance to the Lakes from the American side was a matter of grave concern. Now there existed the Illinois and Michigan Canal and the Illinois River route which would have to be considerably enlarged before it could be used to transport warships. Then the other possibility was to enlarge only the Illinois and Michigan Canal and to build an entirely new extension to the Mississippi River at or near Rock

Island. The only point of difference between the two routes was over comparative cheapness. Whereas, the Illinois River would have to be greatly improved there would have to be built an entirely new canal by the other route. In addition, the rapids in the Mississippi between the mouths of the Rock and Illinois rivers would have to be coped with. Estimates showed that the expense of the two routes would be practically the same. So there would have to be other points of consideration to influence the matter. It seems that the northern location of the newer route would be in general more advantageous because communication between the Lakes and the Northwest would be quicker and easier, which would be more desirable in that it would be possible to bring aid to that region much more quickly than would otherwise be possible. Ships could reach the Lakes from the South with about the same speed by either route. Thus had the estrangement between England and the United States become worse there can be little doubt that the canal would have been built much sooner than it was. But shortly after this the two countries came to a better understanding and the possibility of war became quite remote. Naturally the sentiment for such a canal at that time subsided considerably, in spite of the fact that there was no assurance that in the future the need for quick communication with the Lakes might not again arise.

During the next ten years the movement proceeded only spasmodically. The newspapers of the section neighboring the proposed canal occasionally spoke editorially for it but there was no organized agitation. Besides, the Civil war had shown the value of railroads. Most new investments went into them. Water transportation seemed to be a thing of the past. But all this time there continued to be a bill before the House for the investigation and construction of such a canal. That it continued to be pressed sufficiently to arouse attention in some of the State Legislatures is shown by the fact that there were occasional memorials in favor of or against it from other parts of the country than those that it would immediately benefit. For example, in 1863, the Ohio Legislature presented a memorial protesting against the expenditure of public money for a ship canal in Illinois and the enlargement of canals in New York. The legislators felt that in time of war only those expenditures should be made which are absolutely necessary and desirable for the successful carriage of the war.

In the middle of 1863, there was a meeting in Chicago called the Chicago Canal Convention which discussed, among others, the proposed canal to the Mississippi. There was set up a standing committee for the investigation of the matter of which a certain R. B. Hill was an active member. It does not appear that the convention ever met again.

In January of 1864, a Davenport group decided to become active and to attempt to enlist as many as possible in the movement. This group

arranged a meeting and invited the aforementioned R. B. Hill to address it.

The meeting took place, a committee was appointed, and a memorial to Congress was drawn up. In February of 1864, the State Legislature of Vermont sent to Congress a memorial urging the construction of the ship canal in Illinois to connect the Mississippi with the Lakes. This seems very unusual since it is difficult to suppose of what value a ship canal in Illinois could have been to Vermont for that state would certainly not be on the line of communication with the Atlantic seaboard. Possibly the Legislature was desirous of committing the national government to a policy of aiding the states in various construction projects. Perhaps Vermont even had a canal that it desired built.

At the same time the State Legislature of Iowa sent in a memorial in favor of the construction. It also favored an improvement of the rapids of the Mississippi River to permit large ships to navigate farther northward. It declared the measure was of interest to Iowa commercial and agricultural interests alike as well as to those desiring to be prepared for any military necessity.

In September of 1865 there was held another meeting in Davenport. The announced purpose was to "adopt measures to secure the survey of a direct route on which a canal may be constructed from the Mississippi to Lake Michigan, and to secure governmental aid in constructing said canal, and also for a canal around the upper rapids of the Mississippi River." The meeting chose a committee to carry on this work. The defeat of a canal bill at the last session of Congress was discussed. The *Congressional Globe* contains no record of this vote. Presumably it was considered too inconsequential. In conclusion, the meeting passed the following resolution:

"That the Commissioners appointed at this meeting be instructed, as soon as sufficient funds can be subscribed and collected with which to commence the work, to coöperate with the governor of the state in procuring a preliminary survey westward from La Salle, Illinois, of the nearest and best practicable canal route to the Mississippi River; and to cause a proper presentation of the same to and press it upon the attention of Congress, when it shall assemble, in order that governmental aid may be secured for the construction of this much needed work of internal improvement."

In April of 1866 the House resolved, with the Senate concurring, that "the President should appoint a five-man commission to consider and make report upon the necessity of cheap, speedy, and reliable means of transportation between the western states and the Atlantic seaboard * * * to submit some plan, whereby the United States may coöperate in bringing that about,"

During the next few years there was a minimum of agitation for the canal. There were a few meetings in Davenport but they were little more

than repetitions of the former ones and achieved nothing of consequence. Apparently Rock Island, which logically should have been more interested than any other city, was not much concerned as yet. There appeared at times in the Chicago papers brief articles referring to the project but there was no concerted action. Most of the small communities along the proposed route were only mildly interested, and in the southern part of Illinois it appears the citizens were hostile, at least passively. The Chicago Board of Trade sent a few memorials to Congress as did the Iowa Legislature and the Assemblies of Illinois and New York. The Legislature of Wisconsin sent in a memorial urging the building of a canal in Wisconsin rather than in Illinois. But Congress was quite indifferent.

It seems that the *Davenport Democrat* and citizens of that city had been among the prime movers in the agitation. They had visions of Davenport as a great metropolis, the gateway to the West, and the outlet for all its commerce which should go East and South by water.

AGITATION IS RENEWED

There was little more action until the 'seventies. Then in 1870 the Iowa Legislature came forth with another memorial. Some group also presented a petition through the Governor of Iowa urging that the water communication between the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes be completed by way of the Fox and Wisconsin rivers. Apparently this was a group antagonistic to Davenport.

In 1872 the President recommended that Congress investigate the matter and act accordingly. The Senate appointed a committee which did some small amount of study and found that whether or not a canal would be of great value as a transportation medium in itself, it would be of great benefit as a regulator of railroad freight rates. The Commission found that the freight rates of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad varied considerably. For a portion of its route it ran along parallel to the Illinois and Michigan Canal. Its rates there for 100 miles were about equal to those charged elsewhere for twelve miles. Since the proposed canal would parallel the tracks of this railroad along its entire route the committee felt that there was merit in building the canal.

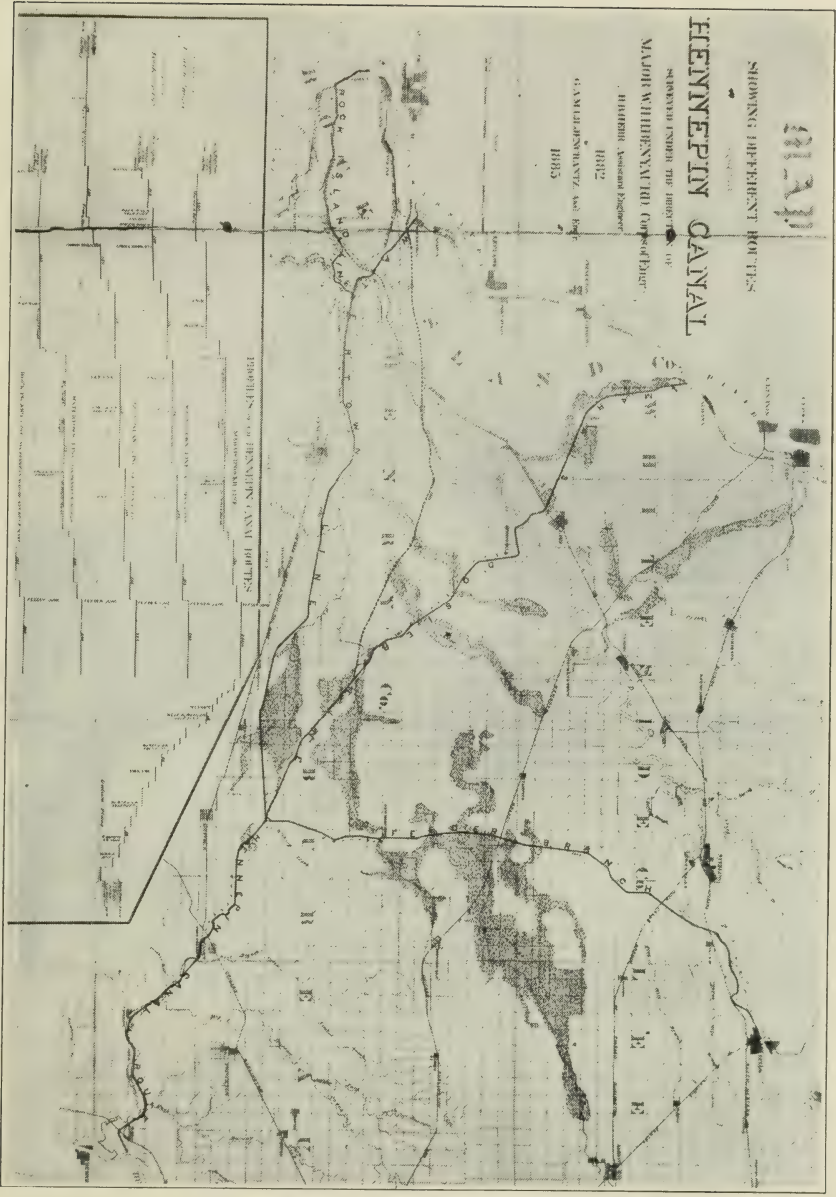
On January 6, 1873, Congressman J. B. Hawley of Rock Island, Illinois, introduced a bill into the House to provide for the construction of a canal connecting the waters of Lake Michigan, the Illinois, the Mississippi, and the Rock rivers. This was read a first and second time and referred to the committee on commerce. It seems that the bill was never reported. Then on December 4, 1873, Mr. Hawley introduced an identical bill but this time it was referred to the committee on railways and canals.

January 26, 1874, John P. C. Shanks of Indiana introduced a bill to provide for a canal from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi at or near Cairo, Illinois, which was also referred to the committee on railways and canals. As is evident, this was in opposition to the other project. There is no appearance that it was intended as a supplementary measure.

Conventions had been held at Rock Island and Geneseo in 1865. The former must have been only a get-together gathering of a few interested citizens. It was sponsored by Maj. J. A. Allan who is sometimes given credit as the creator of the idea of Hennepin Canal. He was a resident of Henry County, Illinois. He tells of his efforts in his autobiography which the *Geneseo Republic* published serially. He apparently wrote it many years after the actual occurrence. As a result, the dates may not be too accurate. He favored the project because he felt that the railroads could never carry heavy freight as cheaply as could water transports. He supported the notion that competition is the life of trade and that the canal would be highly valuable as a regulator of the rates which the railroads of the vicinity would charge.

In the late 'sixties Major Allan spent a considerable time in Springfield lobbying for the Hennepin Canal. He claims credit for the beginning of the improvement of the Illinois River and for the offer to cede the Illinois and Michigan Canal to the national government that it might be made part of one system along with the Hennepin. He failed to have a Hennepin Canal bill passed because of the last minute switch of one state senator who had promised to vote for it, which caused its defeat by one vote. Thereafter the major gave the canal up as a state project and turned his attention to the national government. But then it seems that he left the project as it was for some years for he does not say he took any more action until the 'eighties. B. F. Shaw, of Dixon, sent a letter to the editor of the *Chicago Tribune* in which he gave Major Allan credit for being the De Witt Clinton of the Hennepin. He tells that Major Allan and a certain Justin Stevens of Princeton had a preliminary survey made and found that by tapping the Rock River at Dixon or near that place enough water could be supplied to flood the canal. Major Allan says nothing about this survey in his autobiography but as he wrote the memoirs some time after the occurrence, it would not have been hard for him to omit the fact.

In February of 1874, the Illinois Legislature sent a memorial to Congress pointing out the widespread agitation in the Northwest for cheaper transportation. It claimed that the movement was so important that party lines had been abolished. The paper maintained that an enlarging population and the resultant production increase made more necessary the cheapening of transportation to permit profitable exportation. The memorialists felt that the East would be benefited as well as the West. They



POSSIBLE ROUTES ADVOCATED FOR THE HENNEPIN CANAL AFTER
LEAVING BUREAU CREEK VALLEY

thought that the extension of the Illinois and Michigan Canal to the Mississippi in the form of a new canal would be a great step in this movement. Hence they urged the immediate passage of a bill for the construction of the Hennepin Canal.

1874 IS YEAR OF ACTIVITY

The year of 1874 was one of great activity, although Congress still took no definite action. The Iowa Legislature in March of 1874 sent in to the Senate a resolution stating that in their opinion, which was that of the majority of Iowa citizens, the paramount question of the time was that of cheap transportation for the surplus products of the Mississippi Valley to a profitable market. They felt the canal was all that was needed to open unbroken water communication to the eastern markets from the "largest agricultural region tributary to any single proposed artificial waterway." The memorialists stated that a Congressional survey had found the proposed route quite practicable but no record of such a survey appears accessible. It is likely that the survey was made but that the record has been lost.

The mayor and aldermen of Chicago presented a memorial to the House in March purporting to express the views of 93,000 citizens of Illinois and Iowa. The paper maintained that the proposed Hennepin Canal and the consequent through water-route to the sea would procure the cheap transportation which was necessary and which the railroads had failed to supply. The memorialists pointed out how the Northwest would connect the eastern seaboard through the Mississippi, the Illinois, and the Rock rivers, the Illinois and Michigan Canal and the Hennepin Canal, the Great Lakes, the Erie Canal, and the tide waters of the Hudson. They also mention that engineers have found it practicable. As a further value, in addition to the commercial, the canal would be useful in time of war. There would be a through water-route to the Great Lakes from the Mississippi and the facilities of the Rock Island arsenal would also be open to the Lakes. Coal fields would also be very fortunately located.

Early in March, 1874, a letter appeared in the *Rock Island Argus*, calling a "cheap transportation" convention at Rock Island on Tuesday, March 24. J. A. Allan signed the letter and requested all newspapers to copy the notice. There was an excellent response. Newspapers in many parts of the country carried the announcement. Especially did those of the Middle West prove interested. The *Davenport Gazette*, *Chicago Journal* and *Geneseo Republic* were enthusiastic over the prospects of the convention starting action on the canal project. The *St. Louis Democrat* and the *St. Louis Republican* both indorsed the convention and urged a

large attendance. The *Kewanee Independent* was more or less neutral in its attitude. The *Chicago Post* alone threw in a discordant note. It was suspicious of the intention of having the national government build a canal. It felt the Rock Islanders were very naive in hoping that it would secure the lowering of transportation rates.

The *Fulton Journal* wanted Fulton to be the terminal as did Watertown, Moline, and Rock Island. The *Argus* declared that there were no natural waterways to be taken advantage of by any route other than that by way of Rock Island; that the canal should start at Hennepin, go by way of Bureau Creek to Tiskilwa, to New Bedford at Green River, to the Rock River. Governor Taylor of Wisconsin urged attendance at the convention. He wanted improvement of the Rock River to Lake Horicon, thence through Lake Winnebago, the Fox River, and Green Bay. He opposed the Dixon feeder.

The convention brought out a huge assemblage. The *Argus* discussed the delegates and mentioned that among those present were the editors of the *Davenport Gazette*, the *Davenport Democrat*, the *Muscatine Journal*, the *Dixon Telegraph*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Chicago Times*, the *Fulton Journal*, the *Moline Review*, the *Des Moines Leader*, and the *Dixon Sun*. It became necessary to restrict the seating privileges to friends of the project because of the crowds.

After the preliminaries were over, J. C. Dore, president of the Chicago Board of Trade, told of the work already done, which was on the whole not very much or successful, and the work remaining to be done, which was considerable. He called the project a public necessity, since waterways were the cheapest method of transportation.

Charles Randolph of Chicago gave a report. He said that the government should take over supervision of all that is for the public good. He spoke of the conventions at Rock Island and Geneseo in 1865, and of the memorials from Iowa, Illinois, and cities thereof, and how they had been ignored by Congress. The Hennepin would give the greatest return for the expense of any proposed project. He urged not only this but any proposal for the public benefit as opposed to the railroads. He urged the cession of the Illinois and Michigan Canal to the national government as a further inducement.

The convention chose a committee to memorialize Congress. It passed a resolution recommending the bill proposed in Congress by Representative J. B. Hawley. A counter resolution opposing the participation of the government in business was beaten. The resolution indorsing the Hawley bill specifically designated a canal connecting Lake Michigan, the Illinois, the Rock, and the Mississippi rivers. The *Argus* criticized this, saying the resolution should have been more indefinitely worded to secure more

widespread support. The convention defeated a resolution indorsing the improvement of the Mississippi River.

In the same month Congress received the memorial drawn up by the convention. It purported to represent agricultural, mercantile, and manufacturing interests of Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota. It contended the United States government should assume control over interstate commerce to cheapen transportation costs and to protect the people. * * * Congress had disregarded repeated memorials. The Hennepin Canal would be of more value in proportion to its cost than any other project under consideration. It would not only benefit western exporters above Rock Island but also consumers in the East and even in foreign lands. Together with the Illinois and Michigan Canal and the Illinois River, which the convention wished to cede to the national government, the Hennepin Canal would be the Erie Canal of Illinois. An eastward water route would be better for the West than one southward down the Mississippi River. The states west of the Mississippi would derive more benefit than Illinois itself. There should be haste and efficiency because of the large volume of business, which was over 7,000,000 tons in 1873. Railroad rates west of Lake Michigan were twice those east of it except where canals forced them down. The success of the Illinois and Michigan Canal was considered the best argument in favor of further canal development. In 1873, the Illinois and Michigan Canal carried 6,880,938 bushels of corn and the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific carried 4,471,323 bushels to Chicago. The latter carried it four times the distance and ran parallel to the canal for a part of the distance. In 1873 the canal cost was \$600,000, while the railroad cost for the same distance would have been \$1,722,323—nearly three times as much. The Hennepin would cause the canal freight to Chicago to be quadrupled. Iowa would make a saving of \$1,000,000 and other states would make proportionate savings. The Rock Island terminal would be a place of great scenic beauty. It was near important railroads. The distance from Hennepin to Rock Island by way of the Illinois and Mississippi rivers was 500 miles while by canal it would be sixty-five miles.

The interest in the canal in and about Rock Island was heightened by the fact that the two newspapers of that city took opposite sides in the matter. The *Union*, a Republican paper, opposed the project while the *Argus*, a Democratic paper, favored it. This rivalry, no doubt was a considerable factor in arousing interest in the matter.

CONGRESS TAKES NOTICE

That the convention may have had a considerable effect is demonstrated by the fact that in June of 1874, Congress called up a report

from the committee on railways and canals by Stephen A. Hurlbut of Belvidere, Illinois. The committee had a record of a survey made in 1866 by a Colonel Hudnut, of Chicago. The colonel gave the details of the route he proposed should be followed. Dr. A. Langworth had a survey made in the same year. Government engineers made a survey in 1870. They thought that the dimensions of Hudnut ought to be enlarged upon but that proportionately his survey was very accurate. Hurlbut felt that the Rock River could be cheaply made navigable to the Wisconsin line. Hudnut had estimated that the canal would cost \$4,500,000 while the government engineers thought that \$6,000,000 would be nearer the figure on the basis of enlarged plans. Gorham and Low estimated in 1870 after a survey that the cost would be \$12,479,693.

* * * The canal, it was stated, ought to admit a steamer and a tow of barges carrying 2,000 tons or 66,666 bushels of wheat. The supply of water at the summit would permit sixty-seven passages daily of such tows carrying 134,000 tons of freight or 4,466,666 bushels of wheat. There would be an annual capacity for transport of grain eastward of 1,071,999,840 bushels for each season of 240 days, or eleven times the greatest amount of grain ever received at Chicago in one year. The engineers' estimate would permit the passage of gunboats while that of Hudnut was in expectancy of commercial usage only. * * * If the Hennepin were built and the Illinois and Michigan improved, there would be a continuous passage of slack water navigation for 180 miles (Illinois and Michigan—Chicago to La Salle—ninety-six miles; Illinois River slack water—La Salle to Hennepin—nineteen miles—Hennepin to the Mississippi River—sixty-five miles).

The following table of comparative costs from various points to Chicago on rail and water rates was cited:

	<i>Rates per bushel in cents</i>	<i>Rail</i>	<i>Water</i>	<i>Difference</i>
St. Paul		20.3	10.9	09.4
Winona		18.4	09.3	09.1
La Crosse		18.4	08.8	09.6
Prairie du Chien		18.4	08.0	10.4
Dubuque		17.0	07.3	09.7
Savanna		18.0	06.5	11.5
Fulton		17.5	06.3	11.2
Rock Island		15.0	05.8	09.2
Burlington		12.0	06.9	05.1
Average		17.1	07.8	09.4

The total surplus wheat and corn in Iowa and Minnesota in 1872 amounted to 60,000,000 bushels. The saving in freight rates it was pointed out would be on the two states alone more than would be necessary to construct the canal. It was possible to determine by the effect of the Illinois

and Michigan Canal upon freight rates, what saving might be expected as a result of a more widespread waterway system. The following table shows the comparative freight rates of several railroads running into Chicago for the 100 miles nearest Chicago.

<i>Railroad</i>	<i>Average rate per 100 pounds</i>
Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific-----	\$0.08
Chicago, Burlington & Quincy-----	0.14
Chicago & Northwestern-----	0.18
Chicago & Alton-----	0.12
Illinois Central-----	0.16

Thus the rate of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific which runs parallel to the Illinois and Michigan Canal for that distance has a rate only fifty-three per cent of the average of the others. The president of the Illinois and Michigan Canal, Joseph Utley, said that the railroad raised its rate to fifteen cents after it passed beyond the competition of the canal.

The committee approved the proposed location of the canal. It passed through the richest corn producing area of the country and joined the Mississippi, which also lies in corn country, as well as the greatest wheat-producing area of the continent. The eastern terminus would be Chicago which is the largest grain market of the West and there is always a large supply of lake tonnage. Charles Randolph, president of the Chicago Board of Trade, wrote that the canal would give unbroken transportation from the headwaters of the Mississippi to the Atlantic Ocean either through the St. Lawrence or the Hudson. It would reduce freights one-half between the Mississippi and Lake Michigan. It would be the Erie Canal of Illinois.

The report spoke of the various proposed routes and felt that the Wisconsin contention that the canal should hit the Mississippi twenty miles above Rock Island, not only to avoid the rapids but to afford greater convenience to shippers north of that point, had considerable merit. The engineers thought that the canal could be completed with a minimum of locks, which fact is significant because the great number of locks is one of the prime reasons the canal was not a success after it was finally built.

The committee was favorable and recommended the passage of the bill. There was no definite decision made at the time, however. Not until January 25, 1875, did the proposed bill come up again. Then Congressman Hawley offered a resolution pledging that the canal would be considered on a certain near date. After a little difficulty over the priority of certain other bills this was accepted. But when the day came the bill was again postponed that the Civil Rights bill might be rushed through.

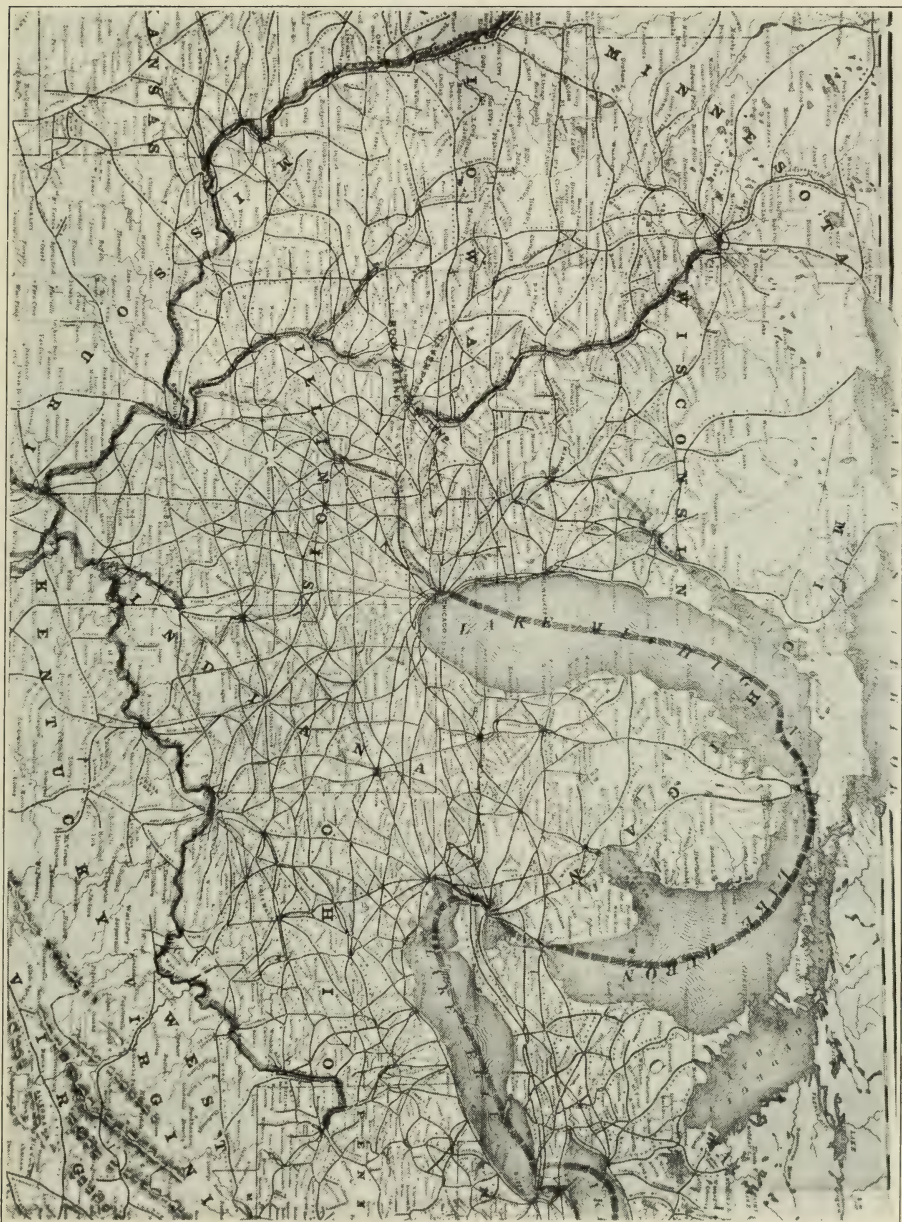
Finally, on February 6, Mr. Hurlbut reported the bill again. Chairman McCrary of the committee on railways and canals opened the debate with a speech in advocacy of the bill, only repeated the arguments which had been often brought up. A considerable majority of the committee favored the bill and urged its passage.

The opposition argued that it was foolish to duplicate the already existing transportation lines covering that part of the country when they were entirely adequate to handle all the business. They thought that the Rock River could not furnish enough water to flood the canal without irreparable damage to itself. They argued that the contention of the proponents of the canal concerning the success of the Illinois and Michigan Canal and its effect in restraining the competing railroads from charging higher rates than the standard to which it held them was entirely fallacious and derived from figure-juggling. On the contrary, they maintained that the Illinois and Michigan was barely meeting expenses after a successful first year which they laid to the novelty of the thing.

But the proponents replied that the canal did hold down the railroad rates and that the greater success of the canal was hindered by its smallness which had been brought about by political maneuvering engineered by the railroads who were entirely undesirous of competing with the government. There were all the other contentions as to convenience and speed which were of importance only in matters that concerned perishable goods which the canal was not designed to carry. The debate ran on for some time but for the most part it was merely repetition. Finally, a small appropriation was made for another survey. This survey was never finally completed. The Illinois River and the Illinois and Michigan were completed but when it appeared that there would not be sufficient time to survey the route of the Hennepin in time to allow the report to be drawn up, the old survey of 1870 was included with some portions from the semi-private survey of 1866. But the engineers were unfavorable and recommended that the canal be not built. As a consequence, Congress voted down all attempts to authorize construction of or further survey for the canal.

MOVEMENT ENTERS SECOND PERIOD

There were two rather well defined periods of agitation for the canal. The first movement had rather scattered beginnings but really gained headway about 1869 and culminated in 1875 with the defeat in Congress of the project for the construction of the canal. Then for four or five years there was a lull in activity. This was the period when the country was in the most unsettled condition in its history. It was the time of the Hayes-Tilden controversy.



MAP SHOWING THE STRATEGIC VALUE OF THE HENNEPIN CANAL, A
SHORT CONNECTING LINK IN THE GREAT LAKES AND
MISSISSIPPI RIVER SYSTEMS

Except for a joint resolution of the Iowa Legislature in 1876, there is no evidence of any active agitation during this period. This paper merely repeated most of the former arguments and urged that the canal terminate somewhere between the mouth of the Rock River and the city of Clinton, Iowa.

At Ottawa in 1879 there was a convention of farmers. They urged deep waterways from the Lakes to the Mississippi River. They circulated petitions to present to Congress. They repeated the old arguments. But their effort was disregarded by Congress. In the Rivers and Harbors bill of that year only \$40,000 was allotted to Illinois for waterway improvement which, of course meant there would be no Hennepin Canal that year. Illinois was especially angered because Wisconsin was allotted \$100,000, which is ample evidence of the jealousy and lack of coöperation between the several states.

In 1881 the farmer group met again but the convention came to naught and was of no consequence.

But now began the final drive and the greatest period of activity in the history of the agitation for the canal. The leading spirit in this movement was Gen. Thomas J. Henderson of Princeton, Illinois. General Henderson, a native of Tennessee, came to Illinois when eleven years old and spent his early life in Stark County. He served in both branches of the Legislature for several terms during the Civil war. In 1862 he entered the Union Army as Colonel of the 112th Regiment of Illinois Volunteer Infantry, and, serving to the close of hostilities, was brevetted as Brigadier-General in January, 1865, for gallant services. He entered politics after the war and represented his district in Congress through ten consecutive sessions. He was a Republican.

There was a veritable flood of memorials, petitions, and endorsements. It is sufficient to list some of them and give the gist of their combined arguments which were on the whole much the same and centering about the same ideas. There were petitions from D. S. Efner, the Chicago Board of Trade, Illinois citizens, the Illinois Legislature, the Illinois and Mississippi River Commission, Iowa citizens, the Davenport Board of Trade, the Hennepin Canal Central Committee of Davenport, the New York Board of Trade and Transportation, the Buffalo Board of Trade and Transportation, the New York Produce Exchange, citizens of the Northwest, and the La Crosse, Wisconsin, Board of Trade, among others. Part of them repeatedly sent in memorials.

CONGRESSIONAL PROS AND CONS

In April of 1882, the Congressional Committee on railways and canals brought in a report embodying the arguments of these various petitioners.

Mr. Henderson made the report. The minority members also made a report. Since these two presentations largely contain all the arguments of both sides it might be well to run through them in some detail in order to classify the position of both sides.

To the members of the favorable majority it seemed that the question of transportation was one of the greatest of the day. Every improvement giving the people cheaper transportation and increased facilities for reaching foreign and domestic markets was mandatory. Good government should promote the public welfare and certainly providing the best and cheapest facilities for reaching markets was one of these. * * * The government, it was argued, does annually expend millions for rivers and harbors for this purpose, and grants millions of acres of the public domain to aid the railroads. It could just as well build canals. The value would be as great or greater than any other project. * * * The committee presented a bill for the construction of a canal from the Illinois River at Hennepin to the Mississippi River at or above the mouth of the Rock River, with a feeder, or branch canal, from Dixon, or some other suitable place on the Rock River to the main canal at or near Sheffield. The committee proceeds to list the reasons why the bill should be passed.

The work is of national importance, not merely local. The sixty-four mile canal would cost less than \$5,000,000. It would connect the upper Mississippi and its tributaries with the Lakes, thus making a through water-route from St. Paul to the Atlantic seaboard.

There would be opened a new avenue of trade and transportation that would extend cheaper rates to all the area tributary to the upper Mississippi by connecting that region with a direct water-route to the eastern seaboard. It would benefit the West, the East, and the South.

The canal would enable the farmers and producers of the upper valley to reach the merchants, manufacturers, and mechanics of New England and the Middle States and vice versa with manufactured articles at cheaper rates all around. In 1874, a senate committee gave a report on transportation routes to the seaboard saying the saving in the cost of the transportation of the surplus crops of Iowa and Minnesota alone in a single year would more than pay the entire cost of the construction of the Hennepin Canal. "When taken in connection with the great benefit to be derived from the construction, it will be the cheapest canal in the whole world."

The canal would be located in a region that in 1879 produced fifty-five per cent of all the corn and wheat raised in the United States.

The construction had been asked by memorials of the governors and Legislatures of Iowa and Illinois, by resolutions of large, respectable conventions of delegates representing the commercial and agricultural

interests of the valley of the upper Mississippi, by boards of trade of such large commercial cities as Chicago, Buffalo, and New York.

The canal would connect the upper Mississippi with the Illinois and the Illinois and Michigan Canal and Lake Michigan thus adding several hundred miles to the eastward route to the seaboard of navigable water routes by way of the Lakes, the Erie Canal, and the Hudson River. Exports of domestic merchandise increased in 1881 over 1871 in value \$455,527,039, of which seventy-five per cent was of agricultural origin. The United States could produce as cheaply as or more cheaply than any other country. If it could surpass in cheapness of transportation also it could control the markets of England and Europe generally. There is no need to argue that the nation selling the cheapest gets the markets. The demand, especially of agriculturists, for cheaper transportation is just. It is sound public policy to furnish transportation facilities most conducive to increase agricultural exports from the country, meanwhile cheapening the cost of the same to all eastern consumers who depend largely on the West. The committee, therefore, felt that the canal should be constructed without unnecessary delay. The majority of the committee favored the bill.

The minority report of the committee presented by Townsend of Ohio was very full and complete. It ran the whole range of anti-public improvement argument. The bill was opposed on the ground that the canal was purely intrastate and hence out of the legal scope of the Federal government. The minority insisted that up to date Federal aid had been expended solely upon the improvement of natural water courses and hence they saw an innovation in this government-built, artificial canal. They also pointed to the extreme liberality of the Federal government to Illinois in the building of railroads and waterways through the grant of money and domain. Moreover, they very pertinently pointed out that Illinois in her Constitution of 1870 forbade the State risking anything in such ventures and called attention to the fact that before the new canal could be effectual many millions would have to be spent rebuilding the Illinois-Michigan Canal. They pointed out the number of canals in disuse, many of which had been offered to the Federal government without consideration. As evidence of the futility of this new canal, they called attention to the fact that there were already five lake and river systems and that the Northwest possessed five trunk railroad lines, each with its many branches centering at Chicago and insist that if the Federal government was to do anything for the Northwest, railroads would be preferable to water courses, because all other methods of transportation were out of vogue. They charge that the Hennepin Canal is of only local significance, its largest effectiveness would be in draining swamps for individuals and benefiting the drainage system for the city of Chicago.

They insist and try to prove from the example of the Illinois and Michigan Canal that the new canal could have no salutary effect on railroad rates. The committee also seemed to fear that the waterpower industries manufacturing on the Rock River would be seriously crippled by the diversion of the water of that region as a feeder for the canal. They deplored very much the inefficiency of government management and in their insistence that the government should not enter the realm of private business as a competitor, the argument resembles very much the deification of rugged individualism of the present day.

We have here a complete statement of the arguments of both sides. It will be unnecessary to go into great detail over the future arguments unless they are new. Although the speech of Mr. Townsend had a considerable effect, Congress consented to make an appropriation for another survey and the submission of estimates of the probable cost of the project.

It might not be inappropriate to quote here what Major Allan, who was sometimes called the father of the idea of the Hennepin Canal, said about the action at this session. "I spent three or four months at Washington the winter of '80 and '81, when we made a beginning. It takes a great deal of work to start any new project. There are so many efforts to get money out of the United States government that members view with suspicion any new proposition. By extraordinary effort we succeeded in making ourselves heard and understood and laying the foundation for something to come. We were successful in getting an appropriation for surveys and estimates."

In 1883 the engineers made a report to the secretary of war concerning the proposed canal and the surveyed routes, which was favorable. This was presented to Congress and turned over to a committee. It did not come up for consideration until the next session.

STILL MORE AGITATION

There were various transportation conventions at different times. In 1881 at St. Louis there was the Mississippi River Improvement Convention, which found time to recommend that the Hennepin Canal be built. The Illinois and Mississippi River and Canal Improvement Conventions of 1882 and 1884 were reported in publications printed at Washington, D. C., where it is presumable that the meetings were held. These reports are unobtainable.

The *Chicago Tribune* of January 25, 1884, tells of a meeting of the National Board of Trade at Washington, D. C. There was a two-hour debate over the proposition of recommending the construction of the Hennepin. J. C. Dore, of Chicago, led the debate in favor of the canal.

He repeated most of the previously-mentioned arguments in favor of the project. G. H. Sidwell told how England was attempting to foster raw material production in India and Russia to supply her manufacturers more cheaply than the United States did. Not only must this competition be met by cheapening costs of transportation but the eastern American manufacturers must be permitted to obtain raw materials more easily that they might meet the competition of the British manufacturers. The meeting concluded with a recommendation in favor of the construction of the proposed Hennepin Canal.

Most of the newspapers in the neighborhood of the canal-site had followed the progress of the canal agitation in Congress rather closely by reporting all the memorials sent in, the gist of the committee meetings, and the attempts to bring the bill upon the floor. Similar reports appear in all the papers.

The *Chicago Tribune* tells of an important hearing before the committee on railways and canals on January 31, 1884. J. C. Dore repeated the speech which he had previously given before the National Board of Trade meeting. General Henderson spoke of the benefits of the Erie Canal. He quoted a letter of Commissioner Fink to the *New York Tribune* to the effect that railroad rates rose and fell with the opening and closing of the Erie Canal. The Hennepin Canal was expected to have a similar effect in the West. He said that Illinois would not be the sole benefactor but that Iowa and other parts of the Northwest would benefit even more. Representative Murphy, a leading figure in the movement for many years, said that the cost of coal would be reduced by \$1.50 a ton which would make a saving of \$3,000,000 per year. Representative James of New York told how the New York Board of Trade favored the project.

CONGRESS AGAIN DISAPPOINTS

On February 7, the committee on railways and canals voted by 8 to 2 to report the bill, with a first appropriation of \$1,000,000. Those who favored joining a project for a Maryland and Delaware Canal to the Hennepin bill were angered because this was not done and threatened to work against it. The *Tribune* says that of two who opposed the reporting of the bill, one was chronically opposed to everything new, while the other was a minion of the railroads' interests of Pennsylvania.

The report of Mr. Murphy was quite ably presented. The local papers reported it in full as did the government record. His arguments which have been touched upon before need not be repeated but he brought forth some new points that deserve reviewing. He told how the government was in the habit of making large gifts for the supposed purpose of public benefit. There had been enormous grants to the railroad interests.

In fact, the government had largely built them and given them to private interests. Mr. Murphy thought the Hennepin was a more worthy project than any of those. He enumerated the favorable arguments.

He thought the magnitude of exports was of concern to every state in the Union. The cereals of the United States now actively competed with those of Russia, India, and others, whereas, before the former had been a practical monopoly. There was grave danger that unless the United States found means of underselling these competitors they would win many of the British and European markets away from the United States. The United States had many surplus cereals which must find a foreign market. Cheaper transportation was the only way to assure retention of these. A through water-route to the coast would make this possible, especially if it were governmentally operated for the public benefit and not for private gain.

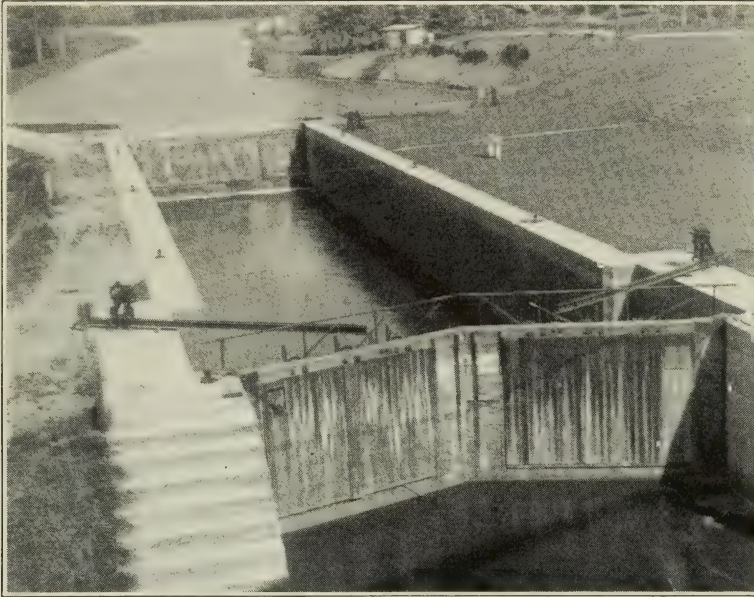
The canal would open a new avenue of transportation and trade and would secure cheaper rates to the entire agricultural region north of St. Louis and west of the Mississippi.

The completion of the project would enable farmers and producers of the North and West to reach merchants and manufacturers of New England and the Middle States at a much decreased cost with their products, while the manufacturers could similarly benefit in westward shipments of manufactured articles. It had been estimated that the saving in transportation cost of Iowa and Minnesota in one year would more than pay entirely the cost of construction.

Mr. Murphy concluded with a statement of the widespread support of the project and of the number of memorials that had been sent in urging its completion. Even President Arthur had seen fit to recommend that it be investigated thoroughly and consummated if it proved feasible. The engineers had made a favorable report upon it for the first time. But again the bill failed to pass. The railroads and the Maryland and Delaware group were instrumental in the defeat.

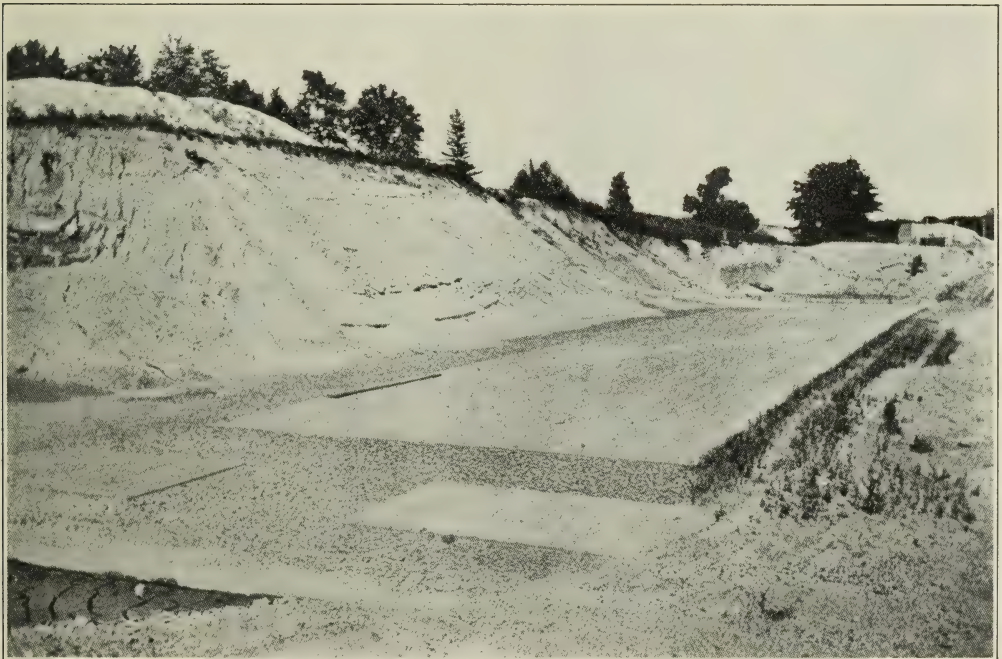
ADVOCATES NOT DISCOURAGED

But the proponents of the project did not give up. They put the patient Griselda to shame. The newspapers of the region continued to advocate the construction. The *Rock Island Argus* and the *Davenport Democrat* were particularly active. There were continual meetings and commissions organized to advertise the canal and to gain support. In 1885, at St. Paul, there was a waterways convention that enthusiastically advocated the construction of the canal. During the latter part of 1884, 1885 and early 1886, Congress was flooded with more memorials than it had ever received before. There was another message from the Chicago



LOCK NO. 19 ON THE HENNEPIN CANAL
AS IT LOOKS TODAY

The leaky wooden gates bespeak little use. Taken from
highway bridge just south of Wyanet



FOUNDATION OF LOCK NO. 19 ON THE HENNEPIN CANAL
Showing excavation necessary

Board of Trade, resolutions from the Iowa, New York and Illinois Legislatures, petitions from D. Pagin, the *Moody Courier*, and the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, and memorials from the citizens of Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, and others. In 1886 there was an organized group of petitions from the Knights of Labor organizations in every part of the country.

An interesting point is the manner in which the Legislature of New York was induced to request its representatives in Congress to support the project. Illinois leaders came to present their side on the floor of that body. They told how the canal would cause freight rates to New York to be reduced. They said that the Hennepin would set a precedent which might lead to some appropriations for New York. But the day was not carried until the Legislature was told that the improvement was necessary to prevent the city of Baltimore and even New Orleans from passing New York as the foremost American city. They were convinced that there was grave danger of this because of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad's carriage of eastern traffic and of the possible deflection of non-perishable freight down the Mississippi River. As a result they voted to memorialize Congress in favor of the measure.

The *Chicago Tribune*, which had previously been comparatively in favor of the project, now that the bill had again suffered defeat, began to urge the improvement of the Illinois and Michigan Canal first with the feeling that its success would be so demonstrated that the Hennepin Canal construction would follow as a matter of course. It criticized the plans for the Hennepin as inadequate and poorly drawn. It felt that if the project should be completed in accordance with the suggested plan, it would be a failure. That that was a most accurate prediction was only too thoroughly proved when the canal was finally built.

In 1886 Edward Russell of Davenport presented a lengthy document to Congress on behalf of the Michigan and Mississippi Canal Commission entitled "A plea for the regulation of freight rates between the upper Mississippi states and Lake Michigan." This discussed the proposal in detail and apparently had no little effect. His chief argument was that the water route to the Atlantic would provide needed competition for the railroads and would act as a regulator of the freight rates thereof.

At this same session Congressman Murphy again reported the canal bill to the House. He spoke of the Illinois and Michigan Canal which had cost some \$650,000,000 and was earning nearly \$3,000,000 a year, indicating that the canal was yet successful in spite of the fact that the tolls were kept low. The State of Illinois had in 1882 decided by legislative and referendum vote to cede this canal to the national government if it would improve it and build the Hennepin as a supplement. This offer was made optional for five years. Murphy thought this offer

should be accepted by the national government. He said that the government should equally patronize the four big industries—agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and commerce. The first named had been the least assisted. Its success depended upon cheap transportation for its surplus products. Since waterways reduce the rates to one-half those of the railroads, it is desirable that such projects as the Hennepin Canal be consummated. There would not only be a market for surplus grains but there would also be a market for eastern products in the West such as anthracite coal. This was obviously a gesture towards the Pennsylvania interests which had been highly instrumental in the defeat of the previous bills. Other heavy merchandise such as salt, iron, nails, oil, or glass, could as easily be transported more cheaply. He harped upon the value to the East, obviously because it was that region which had to be won over to assure success. He called the Hennepin the missing link in the all-water communication between the East and West. He claimed the canal would effect a saving in the cost of transporting wheat of fifty to seventy-five per cent. There would be similar economies in the carriage of other grains, too.

The congressman cited a letter of Governor Seymour of New York to the Legislature. He stated that the propaganda that Europe depends upon the United States for food was untrue. India, South America, and Australia could supply them fully. The condition of affairs had come to such a point that the United States must henceforth undersell competition or lose trade. American labor was higher. Consequently, the difference must be made up in cheapening of transportation. While water competition made rail rates cheaper, they could never become as cheap as water rates, according to the records. The effect of water competition was shown by the fact that rail rates were always higher in winter than in summer. With the lowering of freight rates, exports always increased. Mr. Murphy said that railroads were not operated in the interest of the people but in the interest of the owners, whereas, government-controlled water transportation was in the interest of the people. Then he again urged the waterway as a means of regulating railroad freight rates. He maintained that taking heavy freights away from the railroads would not materially hurt them anyway. He thought that the function of the railroads was rather to haul passengers, mails, light articles, and those things requiring rapidity of movement. He was careful to bring in possible values to all parts of the country. He had already appealed to the East. Now he maintained that the canal would furnish another outlet for the South for its sugar, rice, cotton, and lumber. When the canal should be cut across the Isthmus, New Orleans would become the New York of the South and the outlet for South American and Asiatic trade. From 1880 to 1885 the cereal exports to Great Britain, which had always been

the chief market for such American goods, had fallen off and those of Australia, Russia, and India had correspondingly increased. The latter's progress had been due to the fact that England had done a great deal there to cheapen the transportation system and as a result there had been an increase in production.

The argument that the state should build the canal because it is wholly within that state was held by Mr. Murphy not sound because the benefits will be much more widespread than the area of one state. The congressman enumerated a long list of memorials in favor of the project and pointed out how several conventions had almost unanimously indorsed it, such as those at Rock Island in 1874, at St. Louis in 1880, at Davenport in 1881, at New Orleans and St. Paul in 1885, and at Chicago at various times, the most recent being in 1885. In March of 1885, a Senate committee had decided that in the interest of commerce a system of water improvements was absolutely necessary. In the previous year Congress had been petitioned by the leading wholesale merchants, business men, and manufacturing companies of New Haven, Meriden, Norwich, and Hartford, Connecticut; Manchester, New Hampshire; Fitchburg, Worcester, Springfield, Pittsfield, North Adams, and Holyoke, Massachusetts; Pittsburgh, Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, St. Louis, La Crosse, Duluth, Davenport, Muscatine, Rock Island, Buffalo, Syracuse, and New York. The states to be most benefited, it was stated, would annually pay into the United States treasury over \$34,000,000 in revenue. The cost of the Hennepin would be only a small percentage of this amount. Since it was apparent that the canal offered such opportunities for promoting the public good the congressman thought that there should be no delay in making an appropriation for the construction of the project. The appeal succeeded in securing an additional appropriation for survey and estimates and plans.

ENGINEERS GIVE THEIR VIEWS

In the meantime the engineers had completed surveys of possible routes and their probable comparative cost:

Marais d'Osier, length 64 miles	\$5,811,367
Watertown, via Green River, 65.2 miles	7,207,646
Watertown, via Penny's Slough, 64.9 miles	6,306,552
Rock Island, via Green River, 74.5 miles	6,709,536
Rock Island, via Penny's Slough and Rock River, 77 miles	6,554,052
Cost of Dixon feeder, included in above estimates	1,664,117

It is interesting to note that the engineers, as in all previous reports,

designated the Marais d'Osier route as by far the most logical, not only because of greater ease of construction and hence greater economy, but also because the location was more favorably situated to serve all regions equally. The advantage of having a populous community as the terminal of the canal was not considered as great as that of having the greatest possible convenience for the Northwest which was the region to be the most benefited. The Rock Island surveys were only made in such detail because of the influence of the tri-cities' interest. It is likely that had it not been for this influence only the Marais d'Osier route would have been surveyed as the most feasible but apparently those interests had considerable power. At any rate, in August of 1886, there was included in the Rivers and Harbors bill a \$15,000 appropriation for further examination of the region of the proposed canal by a board of three engineers.

This report was presented in the following January (1887). It is particularly interesting because from its contents the facts were drawn that finally convinced Congress to vote the construction of the canal. It also formed the basis for the plans for the construction.

As to the matter of accepting the offer of the State of Illinois of the Illinois and Michigan Canal, the engineers felt that it should be refused unless the state removed the close conditions governing the transfer to permit the national government to improve it as it saw fit. Both the secretary and the chief of engineers thought that the Marais d'Osier route was considerably more feasible from the standpoint of economy but that the Rock Island route might be more desirable because of the fact that its terminus was in a populous center which was likely to attract more traffic than would a point merely chosen for the sake of economy.

The board of engineers found that freight could be carried by water considerably more cheaply than by rail. Water competition tended to restrain rail rates also. Especially was it effective in the summer and the effect could be carried into the winter because the railroads could not raise their rates too high lest products be stored to await the cheaper rates of the summer. Much of the report consists of material that has been covered before. The chief of engineers had asked the opinion of various persons and organizations as to the probable value of the canal and as to which route they felt would be the most generally convenient. J. C. Dore, of Chicago, preferred the route which was most economical, feeling that the general convenience outweighed the wishes of Rock Island. Former Lieutenant-Governor William Bross advocated the construction of the canal but offered no choice as to the proper route except to say that the one of the most general value should be chosen. He enumerated his opinion of the project in the words of Ralph Plumb of Illinois:

- “1—Our aggregate cereal exports in 1880 amounted to \$288,000,000.
- 2—Since 1880 we have lost more than forty per cent of our cereal exports by reason of competition in the great foreign markets.
- 3—Foreign markets are indispensable for our surplus products.
- 4—Nothing but the cheapest transport possible can enable us to compete with Russia, Australia, and India in those markets.
- 5—The value of every acre of wheat-and-corn-producing land in the Mississippi Valley depends upon the cheapest possible transit to the seaboard.
- 6—The cheapest transit possible is admitted to be by water.
- 7—The Hennepin Canal is the missing link to furnish complete water navigation from St. Paul to New York, a distance of 2,000 miles, utilizing about 600 miles of the Mississippi River in its course.
- 8—By building this canal we can regain and retain the great foreign markets for our cereals and increase the magnitude of our exports.
- 9—By the extension of our waterways to the West the products of that region will reach the consumers of the East at reduced cost to the latter and increased profits to the former.
- 10—No public improvement proposed in this country has been so strongly and generally commended and urged by Legislatures, internal improvement bodies, and eminent public men.”

The Enterprise Club of Comanche, Iowa, found that the section to be served contained one-seventh of the population of the country, one-fifth of the value of farms, and produced one-fifth of the farm products. Hence, anything that would be of value to that region was of value to a large part of the country. E. M. Dickey, President of the Diamond Jo Steamship Lines, whose opinion should have been of value, urged that the canal be constructed, and he especially thought that the engineers' advice should be followed and the terminus located above the Rock Island Rapids, which signified the Marais d'Osier route, rather than the wishes of the tri-cities residents. B. B. Hart, of Clinton, Iowa, expressed a similar opinion. A citizens' committee of the tri-cities expressed a contrary opinion. They recognized that the Rock Island route was not the cheapest or the easiest to construct, nor the nearest to the Northwest, but they maintained that consideration ought to be given to the already established lines of communication. Rock Island was on the main line of many of these and hence would be a very good terminus. They claimed that the advocates of the northern route were those who were wholly opposed to the canal anyway and who wished to see it fail. There is merit in both the contentions but from more recent developments it seems that the most economically sound route would have been the Marais

d'Osier route as the engineers recommended which would have been the freest of lockage and would have been more convenient to the Northwest which would find difficulty with the Rock Island rapids unless they were removed, for which removal no provision was made at the time of the voting of the Hennepin.

The engineers were much concerned over a proposal by a certain Eugene Lewis that the canal center at Rock Island and that there be built a dam across the Mississippi River at that point to provide a landing pool for boats awaiting entrance to the canal. There was a strong suspicion that this was a scheme to secure a free means of waterpower for the power company of Moline and for the arsenal at Rock Island. The engineers sought the opinions of several shipping companies and producers of shippable products on the proposal of a dam. Without exception all protested most strenuously against any such proposition. It seems most probable that it was mainly a scheme to secure a free water-power producer.

The engineers compiled a record comparing the average rates of railroads having water competition with those not having such competition:

RAILROADS HAVING WATER COMPETITION

New York Central	\$0.0088
Pennsylvania	0.0088
New York, Erie & Western	0.0084
Philadelphia & Erie	0.0056
Lake Shore & Michigan Southern	0.0075
Michigan Central	0.00842
Pittsburgh & Fort Wayne	0.0076

RAILROADS NOT HAVING WATER COMPETITION

Boston & Albany	\$0.012
Chicago, Burlington & Quincy	0.01023
Chicago & Northwestern	0.0149
Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul	0.0176
Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific	0.0121
Erie Canal rate at same time	0.0049

In spite of the engineers' favorable report, the canal was not approved. This was a "lame duck" session, which may account for the fact. It was also a time of considerable uncertainty and the beginning of a depression. But during the next year, advocates of the canal continued to work by newspaper and more undercover agitation.

CONGRESS ACTS AT LAST

Finally in the Rivers and Harbors Bill of 1888, there appeared the following provision:

“The Secretary of War is further authorized and directed to cause to be located, on such lines as he may approve, a canal from the Illinois River at or above the mouth of Rock River, together with a necessary feeder for the same said canal to be known as the Illinois and Mississippi Canal, and to be 80 feet wide at the water line, and to have a depth of not less than 7 feet of water, with locks 170 feet long and 30 feet wide. The Secretary shall cause to be made and submitted to Congress detailed plans and estimates for the construction of said canal and feeder; the necessary expenses for making such location plans and estimates shall be paid out of the unexpended balance on hand heretofore appropriated for the survey of said canal by the Rivers and Harbors Act approved August 5, 1886, for the examination of said canal, and of the Illinois and Michigan Canal by a board of engineers.”

It required nearly two years to complete the specifications provided for in this provision.

June 28, 1890, the engineers reported the results of these new investigations to Congress. In accordance with the provision of the bill, the name of the proposed canal was changed from Hennepin to Illinois and Mississippi for some unknown reason. The secretary of war had chosen the Rock Island route in spite of the contrary recommendations of the engineer corps. It is certain that the influence of the tri-cities' interests had a great deal to do with this decision. Also the fact that the arsenal was located at Rock Island doubtless influenced the secretary for that institution was under his control and he would naturally be more interested in favoring the military than the commercial interests.

The Rock Island route was that surveyed in 1886. There were two possible variations—via Green River or via Penny's Slough. The adopted line extended from one and three-fourths miles above Hennepin at the great bend of the Illinois River, via the Bureau Creek Valley, Penny's Slough, and the Rock River to the Mississippi River at the mouth of the Rock River, with a feeder from the Rock River near Dixon. It is interesting to note that some thirty-seven locks were deemed necessary. This meant an average of one lock every two miles. Of course, they would be much closer together than this for there were several long clear stretches. The eastern rise would be practically a stairway of locks, which would certainly be a hindrance and a delay to any sort of rapid passage. But apparently there was no one in Congress to realize this fact. Nothing was done in the way of an attempt to make a change in the plans, at any rate.

This session received the last memorial sent by the Legislature of Iowa, which repeated most of the old arguments and pointed out the num-

ber of memorials sent not only by itself but also by many other agencies. The project was supposed to have received more indorsements since 1844 than any other waterway on the American continent. There was also received a resolution from a water convention held in Cincinnati in 1889 urging the construction of the canal.

SEVENTEEN YEARS IN BUILDING

At any rate, the canal provision was now adopted and included in the Rivers and Harbors bill for 1890. The first appropriation amounted to \$500,000. The project was to be constructed along the lines designated in the recent report by the secretary of war of the plans and estimates drawn up by Captain Marshall. There was no time limit set as to the period in which the canal should be completed. Thus was a project which had been sought for practically half a century successfully put over.

The canal was not to be completed for seventeen years due to a variety of reasons. Of course, there was not available the tools and machinery for such construction as there would be today. Then, too, the labor supply was at times spasmodic. On the whole, when all the facts are considered the construction was not so slow after all. Including the feeder there were some 110 miles to be built; there were thirty-seven locks, as well as aqueducts and bridges. Too, there was some difficulty over securing the right-of-way. It is hardly necessary to trace the process of construction in detail but it might be well to enumerate the appropriations. They were as follows:

August 2, 1882 (survey)	\$ 30,000
August 5, 1886 (examination)	15,000
September 19, 1890	500,000
July 13, 1892	500,000
August 18, 1894	190,000
June 3, 1896	45,000
June 4, 1897	875,000
July 1, 1898	1,427,740
March 3, 1899	700,000
June 6, 1900	1,000,000
March 3, 1901	975,000
June 28, 1902	733,220
March 3, 1905	300,000
June 30, 1906	200,000
June 25, 1910, for improvements and incidentals	75,000
February 27, 1911, for improvements and incidentals	125,000

The total cost amounted to some \$7,690,960.

The yearly progress of construction may be followed by referring to

the annual reports of the chief of engineers of the United States Army in charge of the project to the Secretary of War.

Various difficulties were met in the course of the construction. For example, the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad laid a new line of track which the engineers felt was too near the right-of-way of the canal. There had to be several re-examinations of various sections because of indefiniteness in the plans of the general survey. The actual construction was not begun until July, 1892.

In April of 1895 the western end of the canal was opened to traffic. Up to June of the same year there passed over this portion twenty-four steamboats of a total tonnage of 858, nine barges of 679 tons, and 3,539 passengers.

The next year it was decided to run the feeder from Sterling rather than Dixon because that route seemed more practical. The traffic for the year ending June 30, 1896, amounted to:

	Number	Tons
Steamboats -----	150	4,065
Barges -----	115	14,255
Passengers -----	3,634	
Freight -----		1,865

This latter was mostly coal and is said to have caused a fall in coal prices at Davenport.

The next year there was a request for more effective machinery. There was some difficulty over a wagon bridge at Moline that was holding up the work. The traffic for that year amounted to:

	Number	Tons
Steamboats -----	389	10,037
Barges -----	331	46,584
Lockage -----		1,531
Passengers -----	1,151	
Freight -----		9,583
		(mostly coal)

Freight and traffic for the years up to the opening of the canal:

Year	Steamboats		Barges		Passengers	Freight
	No.	Tons	No.	Tons	No.	Tons
1898 -----	523	17,800	499	76,809	2,279	20,430
1899 -----	474	14,613	417	63,014	2,025	15,005
1900 -----	663	22,176	552	87,070	1,871	18,682
1901 -----	296	7,939	208	29,521	1,470	6,238
1902 -----	293	7,613	84	8,781	996	1,478
1903 -----	560	9,828	193	22,967	1,952	1,333

1904 -----	731	15,239	266	26,299	2,621	510
1905 -----	831	19,272	1,430	64,615	2,310	10,555
1906 -----	703	11,869	202	19,963	2,733	679

CANAL IN OPERATION

The canal was opened in 1907. The occasion was warmly welcomed by those of the neighborhood and elsewhere. The reception of the first steamer to traverse the entire route was attended by the inhabitants, particularly of the small towns. That described in the *Geneseo Republic* was typical. The article was entitled, "Marion Maiden Mariner."

"'U. S. Str. *Marion*.' Such was the legend upon the sides of the first vessel to pass through the Hennepin Canal. This important naval event was seen, as to lock 24, by half the population of Geneseo, on Wednesday, November 13, 1907. * * *

"On Tuesday evening, J. R. Hanna, who has been holding an important position upon the canal for several years, telephoned the writer that the first boat would pass lock 24 at noon, Wednesday. The news soon became widely circulated, and the town was agog with excitement. The first steamer in the Hennepin Canal! How many times, in all these 15 years of construction, have we all heard the words hopelessly sighed, 'I'll never live to see boats navigating the Hennepin Canal.' * * *.

"It is possible that Maj. James A. Allan's spirit hovered over the steamer *Marion*, as she pushed her aqua-line nose through the sheet ice on the Hennepin Canal on Wednesday morning. And we have no doubt, his old friend and colleague, Jerry Murphy, * * * was hovering close to the Major. * * * To Gen. Thomas J. Henderson of Princeton, Illinois, more than to any other man, is due the credit of transforming Major Allan's grand vision into the reality which the citizens of Geneseo beheld recently * * *.

"Would that these staunch old advocates could have seen the interest in the fruition of their bygone labors in Geneseo yesterday! While the whistle at the electric light works was cutting the clear November air with its scimitar of sound, the Geneseo-Elford band was wafting waves of melody upon the winds. The entire town was agog and astir. Teachers of Geneseo's up-to-date schools rose to the occasion. Recognizing that it was a history-making epoch, they gave the pupils an opportunity to commit the lesson to memory in a practical way. The result was a swarm of bright, rosy-faced youths and maidens, all headed for the canal, most of them on foot. The lane from the northwest corner of the corporation clear to lock 24, at the former Jeffrey farm, was alive from end to end with school children, young people from the high school, Collegiate Institute, and from every walk of life. Citizens by the score in vehicles, on foot, on horseback, and in automobiles crowded the lane. Half the town or more thronged the lock and vicinity when the cry went up, 'There she comes!' * * *." (Here was an account of trouble experienced in getting the boat through ice in the lock, and of its successful passage) * * *.

"All hail to the Hennepin Canal! President Roosevelt is for internal

waterways. The Panama Canal will change the geography of a hemisphere, and build a London on our Pacific shores. May the Hennepin do its share in the onward march of mankind!"

Thus was the opening of the canal greeted by its friends, with the super-optimism of enthusiasts.

The canal was never to enjoy even an approximation of the traffic it was expected to carry.

The total tonnages of freight handled year by year from the time of the opening up to and including 1929 are as follows.

Year	Tons	Year	Tons	Year	Tons
1908	1,568	1916	8,620	1923	10,096
1909	2,225	1917	6,902	1924	11,656
1910	8,720	1918	10,239	1925	14,627
1911	9,115	1919	9,540	1926	14,164
1912	9,103	1920	5,684	1927	14,529
1913	10,379	1921	12,344	1928	18,611
1914	19,486	1922	9,893	1929	30,051
1915	10,442				

Most of these totals are negligible compared to the tonnage by railroads. It is interesting to note how the totals rose to a high point in 1914 and then declined to 1917 after which there was a period of variable totals until 1922 after which there has been a continual increase until the present time. It is also interesting to discover that the 1914 total was not surpassed until 1929. Most of the recent gains have been due to gradually increased carriage of gravel. It is also noticeable that in the year of 1929 there was a remarkable increase, comparatively speaking, in the transport of corn. It is not difficult to account for the gravel. It is a commodity that does not require haste in transport and would doubtless be more expensive to transport by rail because of its bulk and weight. Of course, it is true that in recent years there has been a greater demand for gravel.

On the whole, however, it is rather significant that there is any transportation upon the canal at all, even if much of it is for short hauls. It must be cheaper or not even those few would use it. Also, for short distances there is not so great a necessity for coping with the tremendous number of locks. If some of these should be dispensed with there should be an increase in long hauls for there is no question that there is a greater saving in a long haul than in a short one.

By the time the canal bill was passed, the great period of frenzied railroad building was practically at an end. Probably the fact that the railroad interests were not so interested any more in securing concessions for themselves was a factor in the passage of the bill. It is also quite

likely that there was a considerable taint of pork about the ultimate passage. Perhaps there was a trading of votes. At any rate, there was no great consideration given to the plans presented by the engineers. If there had been there would surely have been some realization that there was much in it that had been inadequately done or that had been done at the instigation of certain powerful interests. There is a possibility, too, that the engineers were not as capable as they should have been. It is certain that part of them were opposed to the construction anyway and would not be averse to something that would cause its failure either to secure approval or to operate successfully after its completion.

FALLS SHORT OF EXPECTATIONS

However this may have been, it is certain that the canal has been a failure. In the first place it is too small and interrupted by numerous locks. At times the interval between them is less than a quarter of a mile. This is an immeasurable hindrance to all but the very slowest traffic. Then much of the machinery is antiquated. And, of course, the Hennepin, or Illinois and Mississippi, can never be very successful until the Illinois and Michigan Canal is similarly improved and enlarged. It needs to be larger than the other canal because it must supplement both the Hennepin and the Illinois River. It is not only antiquated but entirely inadequate. Then, too, this system is supposed to serve the Northwest. The fact that the canal was built to Rock Island through the influence of powerful interests and that of the military group in Washington has worked against ease of transportation from that region. The upper Mississippi River will need improving to make it easier for shipping from that region to reach the canal. Likewise, there is a need of more docks and better facilities for reaching the ports. It seems that here, in many cases, is a good usage for motor trucks. They could make connections with and supplement the boats much more easily than the railroads. As the early advocates of the canal declared, the railroads could well confine themselves to light freights and those that require speed in transport, as well as to carrying passengers and leave the heavier products to boats which, though slower, could carry them considerably more cheaply. There is much to this contention. It has strong possibilities. There is much to be done to make a coordinated and connected system of transportation which is the only reasonable and logical solution of the question of the cheapest possible means of communication, which in many commodities is more essential than speed. There ought to be a common control and administration. There is only one logical agency for such a purpose—the national government, if it can be kept free of political maneuvering, which it seems ought to be possible.

It is a commonly accepted fact, that there can be more accomplished in any line of endeavor, if the control is centralized. That truth applies to transportation as much as to anything else. There is no reason why there could not be devised under government contract and operation a unified system of transportation, embracing all methods of carriage on land, in the water, or in the air. And the only body capable of that function is the national government. Waterways could supplement railroads; motor vehicles could supplement waterways; aeroplanes could assist all branches. Coöperation and not competition is the essential factor in the success of any line of endeavor. The Illinois and Mississippi (Hennepin) Canal should be a very important link in this coöperative system, if it were correctly and adequately constructed with the idea of progress in mind.

CHAPTER XII

TRANSPORTATION BEFORE THE RAILROADS CAME

A cursory glance at the water courses of Illinois reveals how natural it was for the first occupants to think of communication by water. The Wabash to the East, the Ohio on the South, and the Mississippi forming the entire western boundary of the state gave a natural and easy entrance to Illinois. Lake Michigan offered a water approach on the northeast, while the Illinois River bisected the state from the northeast to the southwest for a distance of 300 miles. These rivers and their tributaries, many of which were large enough to accommodate the small river craft of those early days, gave an early access to many future settlements in the state. Especially was this true of the southern quarter of the state. Over these routes came the early settlers of the Wabash Country and of the Saline and the occupants of the American Bottoms along the Kaskaskia, while the Illinois River offered an easy approach northward to the Sangamon settlement and even to regions farther to the north and east.

It was the detached nature of these early-born river settlements, largely upon the edges of the state, that made necessary land routes which would afford short cuts overland, saving the long roundabout river trip, and would in time open up the rich agricultural sections lying inland between the river settlements. There was early evident need for such a road connecting the Wabash River settlements with those of the American Bottoms near the present city of St. Louis.

At the very first session of the Territorial Legislative Commission in 1812 Congress was appealed to "for an open road from Shawneetown on the Ohio River to Saline, and thence, the most direct way, to Kaskaskia." Nothing came of this. Two years later the matter was again brought up but was postponed. The words of the resolution are significant: "Whereas it is essential to the prosperity of this territory that roads be laid out and established through the same in such directions that will tend most effectually to facilitate and render most safe the intercourse between the populous extremes of the same." By 1818 immigrants making their way overland from the Ohio to the Mississippi had several routes offered through southern Illinois. Although these were known as main routes of travel, they were in the main only trails worn by use. Flower, the English observer, describes these early routes thus: "The tracks or

routes from one settlement to another in the woods are marked by one notch in the bark of the trees for a footpath, two for a bridle path, and three for a wagon road."

Jesse Walker, a circuit-riding preacher, in 1818, described the roads as "narrow, winding horse-paths, sometimes scarcely perceptible, and frequently for miles no path at all, amid tangled brushwood, over fallen timber, rocky glens, mountainous precipices; through swamps and low grounds, overflowed or saturated for miles together with water. The streams in spring, some of them large and rapid, swollen to overflowing, we had to swim our horses [across], carrying our saddlebags on our shoulders. To be drenched to the skin at the end of a day's ride was nothing."

Even in the early territorial days, Congress manifested an interest in improving the transportation facilities of southern Illinois. Money was appropriated and a commission set up to survey a road across the state from Shawneetown to Kaskaskia. A year before the admission of Illinois to the Union, Congress had completed the survey and bids were asked to remove the timber from a strip thirty feet wide and fifty miles long. It was at once evident, however, that the Congressional funds would be insufficient to bridge the streams, and, to accomplish this purpose the first governor asked his Legislature for a law enabling individuals to build toll bridges. The Legislature answered that the county authorities were already competent to do this. From the very first days of statehood, it became the custom for any region organized as a local government to look upon itself as competent to build roads, the final jurisdiction over the same resting in the county court. The method of laying out roads in these primitive times was comparatively simple. Viewers were appointed to survey the roads and to open them. Sometimes these overseers were given "power to call out all the hands on each side of the road within six miles to cut it out" but a more usual custom, perhaps, was for the county court to compile "a list of persons subject to road labor, each individual being assigned a specific road."

But the early statutes of Illinois abound in acts establishing routes known as State Highways. These roads differed little from the roads established by the county authorities except that the roads could not be changed by the local authorities. All these activities were hampered by the serious lack of funds. To our generation it seems beyond belief that for the first generation of statehood, the Illinois state treasury relied upon taxes drawn upon lands exclusively in the Military Tract, which lands were unsettled and owned largely by non-residents. The general tax on lands in other parts of the state was left entirely in each county to aid them in building courthouses, jails, and caring for the necessary expenses of the county. Lacking state funds, the Legislature adopted an inex-



AN OLD STAGE COACH INN AT BRIMFIELD

Built about 1836. The old fireplace with its crane still is in use.
Owned by William Chamberlain

pensive method for laying out the new state roads. Each act named the commissioners, sometimes determining their compensation or again declaring there should be no remuneration. But more frequently this decision was left in the hands of the county authorities through whose limits the road was to run. Ordinarily the Legislature declared the termini of the road and occasionally located intermediate points to be touched. In establishing the Chicago-Galena road the Legislature specified it as "making Meacham's Grove in Cook County and the residence of John Phelps (one of the commissioners) on Rock River." The state commissioners were to file their survey within each county with the commissioners thereof, who in turn were to bear the responsibility of making the road. It is not surprising that the legislature was generous in establishing such state roads since the cost to the state treasury was essentially nothing. In the session of 1834-35 there were forty-two such roads established and in the special session of the same year, forty more were added.

Just as the first white towns frequently had been attracted by the physical features which had determined the location of Indian villages, so, too, did these early roads frequently follow the Indian trails. Speaking of this tendency of the early settler to use the red man's routes in laying out his legal roads, one authority in describing the practice in the Bloomington region says, "There was one trail leaving Mackinaw Timber near Fort Henline, leading northeast to Indian Grove twelve miles distant and almost on a bee line. There was another leading from the Kickapoo Town on my father's farm to the Delaware Town on the Mackinaw, three miles to the southeast, and from there to the southeast, and from there to the Indian Town at the head of Old Town Timber about fifteen miles as the crow flies. There was a trail from the Kaskaskia Town southwest to Smith's Grove about ten miles as the trail ran. Another was the Fort Clark trail leaving the Kickapoo Town to the southwest until it reached the Fort some fifty miles away."

The white pioneer was no less resourceful than his red predecessor. Some of the best known early Illinois trails had come to follow without aid of legislation or surveyor the marks of an adventuresome trader. Such a road was the Peoria-Galena road known as Kellogg's Trail. It seems that Kellogg, in the spring of 1827 with three ox-drawn wagons and a drove of cattle, blazed a trail from Peoria to Galena, 160 miles distant. This was an attempt on his part to shorten the long boat haul from Galena by way of the Mississippi to Grafton and thence to Peoria by the Illinois River. The general course of the road was due north from Peoria to where Dixon now stands and then north and west to Galena. It was a popular road and in its first year a Frenchman found it profitable to open a ferry across the Rock River where Dixon now stands. The succeeding year the Federal government established a mail route which

offered weekly service over Kellogg's Trail. Within two years this had been increased to a tri-weekly. By the close of the Black Hawk war, a branch line was established from Dixon to Chicago. No sooner were roads projected or opened across wide areas than the authorities were perplexed by the problems presented in the crossing of the many streams. Moreover, those streams having wide swampy bottoms subject to frequent overflow were the most perplexing. The Legislature in 1827 recognized the seriousness of this problem in passing a rather comprehensive statute concerning turnpikes, ferries and toll bridges.

Another influence stimulating the natural tendency to lay out roads had been the establishment by the Federal government of mail routes very early on the frontier. Even in territorial days such roads had been established in Illinois. The government maintained over many of such routes a weekly mail service and over the less important a bi-weekly. At first the mail was carried by horseback. Soon, however, as the roads were improved, we find a mail carrier using the stage and as early as 1819 passengers were offered weekly passage from Kaskaskia to St. Louis for a fare of four dollars, the trip each way consuming some thirty hours.

As early as 1827 the Legislature felt the necessity of systematizing the more or less sporadic attempts to provide transportation facilities. To this end they provided that all legally established roads should be public highways. At the same time, they declare that the county authorities shall be vested with the general superintendency of all such roads in their county. The commissioners are also allowed to subdivide their counties into road districts, each of which should have an official whose refusal to serve was to be punished by a fine. Upon the supervisor in these local districts was laid the responsibility of maintaining the roads in good repair and for marking the same with the "direction and distances to the more noted places to which said road led." The law provided for a universal road service for all male persons between eighteen and fifty years of age upon summons from the road commissioner. The importance of this position as road supervisor seems reflected in their exemption from all military or jury duties. At the same session of the Legislature a general act on turnpikes, ferries and toll bridges was enacted. To meet the lack of financial resources, county commissioners were empowered to establish ferries, turnpikes and toll bridges by granting to individuals desirous of entering into such activities a license which functioned as a valuable monopoly. The Legislature saw fit to hedge this license about with many restrictions. The character of the ferry operator's boat, the hours of his service and the competence of his helpers were all supervised. Likewise, he was held responsible for providing suitable landing wharves, causeways, etc. Each keeper of a ferry was compelled to furnish service from dawn to dark and give free passage to all public messengers, officials and



ILLINOIS STATE ROAD No. 36, PITTSFIELD



SCENE ON OCEAN TO OCEAN HIGHWAY NEAR PITTSFIELD

to all grand and petit jurors. Likewise, they were compelled to furnish service at night although they might charge double rates. All toll fares were to be fixed from time to time by the commissioner's court. There was to be no discrimination in the service offered, each person to be carried in the order of arrival. When once licensed the owner of a ferry was given exclusive privileges for a distance of three miles down the stream. All men necessary to the operation of the ferries were to be free from military duty, road duties, or jury service. Provision was given the county authorities to revoke licenses upon cause and there was provision for the purchase by the public of the ferry property at cost plus ten per cent.

In dry seasons most of the streams could be forded and the roads were usually described as leading from one ford to another. By early legislation fords of less than thirty inches in depth were declared to be public property. The streams, such as the Illinois, that were too large to ford presented more formidable difficulties. To meet this problem so long as travel was scant, the ferry functioned fairly satisfactorily but with the increase of travel the necessity for a more rapid method of crossing the streams in the form of bridges became imperative. Frequently we find the ferry owner also a bridge builder, carrying the two investments side by side. The Legislature very early made small appropriations to the several counties, usually for the bridging of the lesser streams. However, the large bridges offered a problem too great for the slender financial resources of the state, to say nothing of the localities. And here the law makers fell upon the expedient of stimulating private initiative by granting to commercial companies the monopolistic advantages of a toll bridge. Thus in 1831, by special act, Samuel Lapsley is granted the right to construct a toll bridge across the Illinois River between Utica and Peru which should be completed within two years, meanwhile the proprietor was to maintain a ferry. The value of his bridge was to be appraised by state officers to determine the repurchase price by the state in the future. The law attempted to lay down adequate regulations in regard to tolls, hours of use, obstruction of river traffic and necessary requirements. The Peoria Bridge Company was allowed to incorporate and sell shares up to \$50,000 for the construction of a bridge at Peoria Lake and the close identity of interest between bridge and ferry owners is exemplified in this case by a provision that the proprietor of the bridge must indemnify the owners of the ferry at the same place for any loss in their business. The toll schedule on these bridges, carefully regulated by the Legislature, reveals the growing use for such bridges. An ordinary two-horse wagon paid twenty cents; additional draft animals were five cents each; man and horse, five cents; for each hog or sheep the toll was two cents; or in large droves half the rate; pedestrians, five cents each, with a frequent provision "that rates at night shall be double the daylight rates." In some of the

legislation authorizing these bridges there are hints of innovations. The Meredosia Bridge Company was authorized to construct a bridge and railroad across the Illinois River at Meredosia to connect any line leading to the east side of the river and to Keokuk or Quincy.

In many cases the bridge company or owner was allowed to improve the roads leading to and from his bridge. This was especially pertinent to the bridge builders in the Illinois River Bottoms and hence in 1847 the Legislature systematized this peculiar situation by enabling persons "immediately interested in any road leading to any ferry, warehouse, or landing on the Illinois River that passes through wet, low, or inundated land * * * to form themselves into associations for the purpose of opening, grading, and keeping in repair such roads." Such associations were authorized to locate or relocate state or county roads between the bluffs or high lands of the river valley. Annual meetings of such associations of citizens were provided which might by vote levy upon each member of the society the amount of labor or money necessary to carry on the work. They were also to receive taxes from the ferries, otherwise going to the county court, to further their road work.

This idea early spread from the problem of the overflowed bottom country to the wider idea of a turnpike system. As early as 1836 the Legislature authorized the construction of a turnpike "or any part thereof" from Alton to Jacksonville and thence on to Beardstown, Rushville, Macomb, Monmouth and Galena. Capitalization of \$1,000,000 was authorized and a ten-year limit was placed upon the completion of the work. Sometimes rates were regulated by allowing the income to be equal to twelve per cent of the capital paid in. Again the Legislature attempted to set a maximum of eighteen and three-fourths cents per ten miles for four-wheeled vehicles.

The 'Thirties were particularly productive of roads leading either from the Illinois River to the Mississippi or from points on the Illinois to the Great Lakes or roads leading across the state by way of some prominent place on the river. Peoria was joined in this period to Chicago, to Rock Island, to Galena and eastward to points on the upper Wabash. From Beardstown there radiated a number of roads, south and east, north and west, to Mississippi River ports such as Alton, Quincy, and the new town of Commerce. The state could afford to be generous in such matters because the expense both of surveying and building was settled upon local government units and it was not until '43 that an act was passed authorizing the county commissioners' court to lay a general tax for road purposes. However, individuals so taxed were permitted to meet this obligation by personal labor.

The latest development in local transportation in Illinois before the



EAST ELM STREET, CANTON



SOUTH MAIN STREET, CANTON

coming of the railroad was an era of plank-road building. The connection between this and the earlier ventures to improve the transportation facilities is evident in a special act of 1849 in which Henry L. Owen is authorized to build a plank road from the south end of his bridge in Salisbury to the bluffs of the Illinois Valley extending above the high-water level and he was authorized to collect toll on this plank road not to exceed one-half of those charged on his bridge. Sometimes the tolls were unregulated, as for instance, in a special act authorizing a company of \$25,000 capital to build a road from Monmouth to Oquawka. One of the earliest roads was known as the Chicago Southwestern Plank Road Company leading from Chicago to the Des Plaines River. Capital of \$100,000 was subscribed for a road from Canton to Liverpool on the Illinois River. From the prosperous Illinois River port of Lacon, a plank road was projected to Wyoming and Toulon. Princeton was to be connected to the river transportation on the Illinois at West Hennepin by a similar venture. The interest in this form of transportation is evidenced by the fact that the Legislature passed a general act in 1849 bearing upon this form of road building.

Minute details of regulation are laid down, bearing upon the number of incorporators, method of choosing directors, regulations concerning the use, the stipulation of publicity in their financial affairs, the right of eminent domain through private land and provisions for official inspection of each section of the road completed, together with regulations concerning the maximum toll charges. These rates were to run two cents a mile for every one-horse vehicle; three cents for two-horse vehicles; one cent a mile for every ten head of cattle, sheep, or swine; one cent a mile for horse and rider. A new feature creeps in. Stockholders are made liable for the debts of their company and there is also a limit upon the total indebtedness of such companies. The right is reserved by the local governments to tax a plank road as real estate. The general widespread interest in this form of road building is evident by the fact that county courts are authorized to take stock up to one-third of the stock in any plank road company.

The fifth decade of the nineteenth century was profoundly interested in this form of local transportation. But already certain differentiations were beginning to appear. The Peoria and Farmington Plank Road Company was allowed by law to use macadam construction instead of plank. By 1855 the new era of railroad building was beginning to have its effect in the affairs of the plank roads for the Legislature in that year provided that "whenever it shall be necessary for the construction of any railroad on the line of any plank road, the company is hereby authorized to negotiate and transfer its plank road if a majority vote of stockholders

is in favor and if a county court of that county in which the said plank road is situated grants its permission." More or less simultaneously with this comes legal authorization for plank road incorporators to transfer themselves into railroad companies. Sometimes this was done by the transfer of stock and sometimes by direct sale and so, before the opening of the Civil war, the State of Illinois already was contemplating the solution of her transportation problems by means of a state-wide network of steam driven railways.



WEST SIDE OF THE SQUARE, LEWISTOWN



FULTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE, LEWISTOWN

CHAPTER XIII

THE COMING OF THE RAILROAD

No eighteen-hour train service lay at the call and purse of the traveler of the United States in the early decades of the nineteenth century, when he wanted to travel from the Atlantic seaboard to that part of the Northwest Territory which was to become Illinois. Along the Mississippi and Illinois rivers lay lands which were to be reached only by three modes of travel—wagon and saddle horses on land, and boat on the waterways. Often these had to be combined in different stages to reach a certain destination, depending upon the starting place and goal. The metallic whinny of the iron horse had yet to transform this far-away land into a half-day's journey.

Suppose John Doe, a New York State resident, was anxious to emigrate to Illinois for the purpose of settling. Traveling in any one of the four decades of the early nineteenth century, he went by horseback or stage to Pittsburgh, then in flatboats down the Ohio to Shawneetown of eastern Illinois, where carriage was resumed. Sometimes John was in sufficient pocket to pay the six cents a mile which the stages charged on the long journey through the new land. In the second decade of the nineteenth century steamboats operated on the Ohio and Mississippi route. After 1817, an emigrant coming by boat from East to Cairo was able to engage steamboat passage northward on the Mississippi, and after 1828 could continue to travel by steamboat up the Illinois.

The gazettes of the early days give us an idea of the routes the emigrants took. S. A. Mitchell, in "Sketches of Illinois," published in 1838, notes that some travelers went north by the lakes to Chicago, others followed a more devious southern route which included travel from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh by early eastern railroad and a short canal, thence to Wheeling on the young Baltimore & Ohio Line, and a stage line south to Guyandotte on the Ohio River, where a steamboat took the wanderer to Cincinnati. Mitchell quotes the Philadelphia-Pittsburgh fare at ten dollars for the 394 miles, and prices a three-and-a-half-day stage journey from Louisville to St. Louis at seventeen dollars. The early emigrant had to go to a certain destination of known size and make his way into the interior from there by western methods. Mitchell further advised the would-be traveler that teams were best for the roads in autumn, when camping was

possible. Singles would find horseback cheapest at about a dollar and a half a day. Deck passage on the steamboats was quoted reasonable at forty to forty-five dollars for the twelve to fifteen day trip from New York to St. Louis via Pittsburgh. The traveler's provisions would amount to fifteen to eighteen dollars.

A. D. Jones, writing in "Illinois and the Far West" (1838) has a more varied itinerary. He says the routes lead by road from New York to Philadelphia, the "cars" to Harrisburg, canal to Holidaysburg, portage of the railroad over the Alleghanies, and then railroad and canal to Pittsburgh. A raft, flatboat or steamboat then transported the traveler westward to St. Louis, and later to points north.

The National Road from Cumberland, Maryland, furnished the emigrants' wagons one outlet to the West, but few streams were bridged and the only connections to this main line were by stage and mail coaches. The road was not adequately completed west of eastern Illinois, and only a poor road completed the route to the Mississippi.

The difficulty of travel and transportation did not affect the traveler so much in an economic way as it did the western farmer. Only one-twentieth of the acreage of Illinois could be farmed advantageously because of the fact that farmers could not bring their products to market over the corduroy roads and government turnpikes then prevalent. Goods were paid for in twelve months' credit, and only those land owners who lived close to a navigable stream or good road could make their land profitable. The Illinois River counties enjoying close contact with the St. Louis or New Orleans markets found their tilled acreage increasing and their population going far upward. Even at that, the state showed a 348 per cent gain in population from 1810-20, and in the next decade 185 per cent increase was noted.

EARLY RAILROAD AGITATION

But even at this early date men's minds turned to thoughts of the rails, after that mode of travel had been proved feasible to the skeptics in the East. Dating from early in the sixteenth century efforts had been made at guiding a conveyance along rails, but not until 1825, with the use of the locomotive on the Stockton and Darlington Railroad in England, did the idea become popular. The success of this transportation by the steam engine, then in process of development, led to more lines, so that in 1830 eastern United States found that a fifteen-mile line of rails had been laid from Baltimore to Ellicott's Mill, Maryland, with a steam locomotive as drawing power. In 1831 flanged "T" rails were adopted for use here, and from then on the feasibility of railroads was proved to the public and Legislatures by the practical use in the East.

By 1834 several railway lines across the East were projected mainly to connect the fertile West with the seaboard and eastern cities. These projected lines from the eastern coast to Illinois had become economically important in the eyes of many, who now thought of railroads as a necessity rather than an oddity. Less than a decade had served to prove the utility of the steam train to the American people with their wide areas. The population was becoming "railroad-minded" with a fervor, even in these western states, newly created.

A connection between the Erie-Wabash Canal and the Illinois River was thought of at an early date, when proposals for the canal from Lake Erie to the Wabash River Valley were broached. A favored route for cross-country travel which later held the roadbeds of the nation's best railway lines was from the Hudson Valley of New York to the Valley of the Delaware, across the Allegheny River, along the Ohio River through Indiana to the head of navigation on the Illinois River. From there a line was to connect with the Mississippi River at the foot of the Des Moines rapids near the present Keokuk dam. A cross-Indiana line also was proposed by an early schemer to connect the fertile lands of Illinois with the nation's seaboard. Not until years later, however, were these dreams to be realized.

Except for the fact that in 1829 the *Galena Advertiser* carried an item to the effect that a railroad was proposed from Pittsburgh to the head of navigation on the Illinois, the first serious attention given railroads in the state and Illinois River Valley came in 1831. The state had been assigned a generous land grant by Congress to finance an Illinois-Lake Michigan Canal. In 1829 the governor and Senate had been empowered to name a biennial commission on canal work. An amending act of February 15, 1831, permitted this commission to have an engineer investigate to determine whether the Calumet River were a sufficient feeder between the Chicago and Des Plaines rivers for the canal route, especially since 1830 had been a season of drought. The engineer was also to determine if a railroad connecting Lake Michigan and the Illinois River would be of more public utility, but if his report favored the canal, active construction was to start immediately.

James M. Bucklin was appointed engineer, and the Legislature petitioned and received from Congress permission to use the land grant for a railroad instead of a canal. Bucklin busied himself in the spring of 1831 and found Wolf Point, the junction of the north and south forks of the Chicago River, the best points of departure for a possible railroad. It was to run thirteen miles straight to the rapids of the Des Plaines River, a place known as Laughton's Ford, then overland down the river to the mouth of the Kankakee. No heavy work was needed on grading,

since the maximum grade was ascertained at twenty feet to the mile, the maximum curvature 2,000 feet. As a 110-mile road existed at Baltimore at the time, Bucklin found no qualm in advocating ten miles of double track at the termini, "T" rails weighing eighty pounds to the yard, and a railroad which would cost \$25,000 a mile, as against a canal at \$100,000 a mile.

The commission's report of November 22, 1831, recommended a railroad in place of a canal, and in the next winter inquiries were made in New York as to financial support but no good offer was received. Lack of backing defeated the project, and when Governor Duncan's inaugural address of 1834 seriously urged the immediate construction of the canal, railroad adherents recognized their project had been shelved.

If this one line had been disregarded, other routes were coming to mind in various localities, projected largely to connect centers remote from the rivers. A haul of from ten to twenty miles over frontier roads set the limit on profitable farming, as a man could not raise grain and carry it far by horses to the river for shipment and make money. In different towns over the state meetings were held at one time or another to enlist help in starting a railroad in their own sections, while certain enterprises received charters from the General Assembly.

June 28, 1831, the Assembly named commissioners to survey the American Bottom from the shore opposite St. Louis to the bluffs, to determine the practicability of a railroad for conveying coal. The session of 1832 brought issuance of incorporation papers to the Springfield and Alton Turnpike Road Company, to construct a road from Springfield to a point in St. Clair County opposite St. Louis, the motive power being "steam, animals or mechanical powers." Four commissioners were named to open subscription books in eastern cities. Toll collections were to be limited to a twelve per cent return on capital, and near the end of the charter the Legislature added that a single or double track railroad might be laid. The project was to be completed in ten years. A similar act of March 2, 1833, gave papers to the Rushville and Beardstown Turnpike Road Company. In 1834 the Chicago and Vincennes Railroad Company was given a charter, although work was not finally done until many years later.

The Legislature in 1832 also heard various proposals for a cross-state road, a central road from Peru to Cairo anticipating the Illinois Central route, and the usual Lake Michigan-Illinois River connection. During the same year, meetings were held in the state favoring a road from Lake Erie to the Mississippi, while interested citizens of Jacksonville advocated a rail connection between their town and the Illinois River. Abraham Lincoln wanted an extension to Springfield, but deemed the estimated cost of \$290,000 too much. After the 1832-33 session of the Legislature



(Courtesy of the Findley Collection, Knox College, Galesburg)

MAP OF 1850

Showing telegraph lines, projected railroad from Peoria to Oquawka, and canals of the state. From Drown's Record

had given a few trivial charters to turnpike companies authorizing the alternative of railroad construction, definite suggestions began to take form. At a meeting held in 1835 George Forquer proposed a cross-state railroad from Danville through Decatur, Springfield, Beardstown and Rushville to Quincy, but delegates from Adams and Schuyler counties demanded an extension east to the Wabash and Erie Canal, and also a road to the Ohio River through Vandalia. On May 25, 1835, the hopes of Springfield to be a center of commerce were heightened by a meeting where proposals were made for a road to Alton and another to tap the Illinois River. A few weeks later a convention of delegates met to further the Springfield-Alton scheme, setting the cost of the work at \$500,000. Optimistic promoters estimated 37,346 tons of freight would be available for traffic annually.

Chicago was the center of numerous early plans for railroads, a majority of which would have their western termini at Alton. The Chicago-Vincennes Company asked for a \$3,000,000 corporation which would start construction in three years, and finish in eight a railroad through Danville, Paris and Palestine to Vincennes. T. W. Smith and others even petitioned Congress for a right-of-way and a land grant of pre-emption rights of a section of land on each side. In return, they offered to carry the mails free. Before 1835 lines from Chicago to the Wabash River, Chicago to Galena, and Quincy to Terre Haute had been suggested by the *Peoria Champion*, but canal enthusiasm seemed to dampen interest in railroad schemes.

Heretofore scattered ideas for railroads had been brought forward at random. On October 16, 1835, Sidney Breese, a prominent citizen of the state and later a United States senator, proposed a comprehensive program of internal improvements to give the south and west sections of the state transportation facilities. This plan included a road on the route of the present Illinois Central, from Peru to Cairo, and also from Peru to Galena, with lateral arms to the Illinois, Mississippi and Wabash rivers. Meetings in Shelby County, Vandalia, and Decatur endorsed the proposal, and delegates in Jackson County deplored the apathy of southern Illinois for the proposed improvements. The *Sangamon Journal* of late 1835 gave its approval to Breese's scheme, amending it, however, with suggestions for railroads from Alton to Shawneetown, Quincy to the Wabash and Erie Canal, and Springfield to Alton. Inasmuch as the paper suggested a combination of land grant and stock aid to finance the lines, a skeleton of a state system seemed at hand. Meanwhile, in 1836, a long list of incorporators backed Breese's suggestion by forming a \$2,500,000 company to build the central railroad, though the movement expired before fruition.

It was at this time that observant boosters of the state pointed out

that America's twenty-three miles of rails in 1830 had grown to 1,100 miles in 1836, a tremendous increase. The citizens of the state not only held meetings and read the outlines of proposed railroads their newspapers suggested, but they zealously supported the steps toward incorporation, and urged their representatives in the assemblies to pattern after the examples set by other states in building railroads. Cities often went to such extremes as Harmon, a northern Illinois town, where the assessed valuation of property totaled \$56,000, and the subscribed stock for a proposed railroad amounted to \$50,000, among the townspeople. Many companies were formed which never functioned to build the transportation lines they were chartered for, but the records of the legislative acts reflect the tide of feeling in the era. Governor Duncan had discouraged legislation for roads by favoring canals in his inaugural address of 1834, but at a special session of the Ninth General Assembly, called December 5, 1835, a great number of railroad charters were granted in a short-lived session.

There were certain characteristics of these early charters which were common in all grants. As an example, we may note the Belleville and Mississippi Railroad Company, chartered December 28 by four incorporators for a period of forty years, after which state or county purchase could be claimed. This proposed line from Belleville to the bank of the Mississippi included the privilege of extending on the bluffs on the eastern side for ten miles either north or south. Steam, animals, or other modes were to be used for motive power, and construction was to commence in two years, the finish being required in five. A \$300,000 capital was to come largely from the sale of stock at \$100 a share. Land held by private parties and necessary for construction purposes, whose purchase could not be amicably negotiated, was to be finally evaluated by five freeholders selected by a St. Clair County justice. No obstruction was to be permitted. The right of regulation, tolls, etc., was left to the company. All these conditions were found in the charters granted to a number of lines authorized during the session. They included: The Pekin, Bloomington, and Wabash Railroad, which was to run from Tremont in Tazewell County through Bloomington with the privilege of extending east to the state line to the Erie-Wabash Canal; the Mississippi, Springfield, and Carrollton Railroad which was to lead from Grafton, at the mouth of the Illinois, to Springfield via Carrollton, Point Pleasant, and Millville; the Alton, Wabash and Erie Railroad, from Alton through Shelbyville and Danville to the Indiana state line; the Central Branch Railroad Company, whose proposed path was from Darwin on the Wabash River to Shelbyville via Charleston; the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad, from Galena to Chicago; the Wabash and Mississippi Line, from

the Indiana state line through Danville, Decatur, Jacksonville, Meredosia, Mt. Sterling, and Clayton to Quincy; the Shawneetown and Alton Railroad Company, which was to have its tracks from Shawneetown to Alton through McLeansboro, Mt. Vernon, Carlyle, and Edwardsville; the Alton and Shawneetown Company, between the same towns but running through Edwardsville, Lebanon, Nashville, Frankfort, and Equality; the Mt. Carmel and Alton Railroad, from Mt. Carmel by Albion, Fairfield, Salem, Carlyle, and Edwardsville to Alton; the Wabash and Mississippi Valley Railroad, which was to drop from the state line to Danville, Shelbyville and to the Mississippi "by the best route;" the Warsaw, Peoria and Wabash Railroad Line from Warsaw to Carthage, Macomb, Peoria, Mackinawtown, Bloomington, and the Indiana state line; the Waverly and Grand Prairie Railroad, a short line from Jacksonville to Waverly for an intersection with a Springfield-Alton track; the Pekin-Tremont Railroad, from Tremont to the Illinois at Pekin; the Rushville Railroad Company, from that town to the river; and the Illinois Central Railroad Company, whose many incorporators asked a line from the mouth of the Ohio River to the Illinois-Michigan Canal, and a branch thence to Galena.

Through the welter of this epidemic of agitation for railway building, certain definite objectives are revealed. All the lines were to be connections between river ports, i. e. aids to river traffic. There was a determined effort to erect Alton into a successor to St. Louis, which accounts for the number of lines which were to have their termini in that city. The plans would have tied the lower Wabash to the Mississippi, the upper Wabash near Danville to the Sangamon towns and thence westward to the Illinois River settlements and finally joining all to the Mississippi at Quincy, Warsaw and farther south.

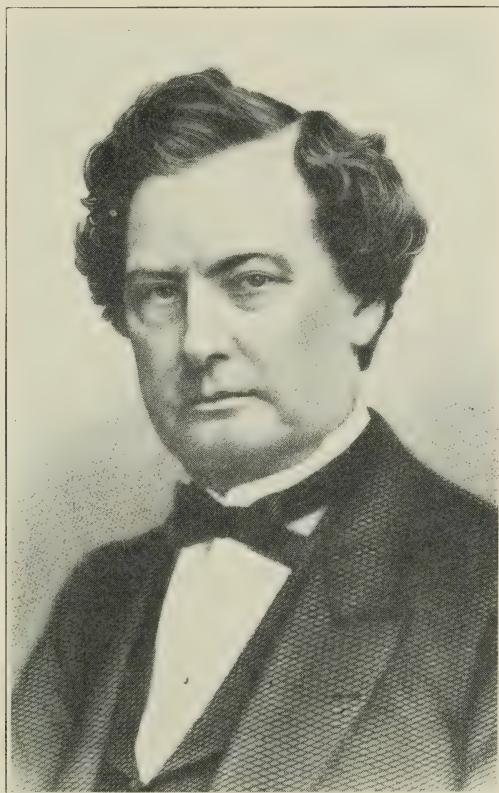
But these lines were built on paper only. None of the charters were fulfilled, and it was years later before the connections they contemplated were realized.

FIRST RAIL LINES BUILT

The first rail lines actually built in the state fell far short of the ideals which the extravagant schemes of the preceding period embodied. Two short roads, neither employing steam for the motive power, came into being in 1836 and 1837 to connect lands a short distance from the rivers with landing depots. One of these ran from a point opposite St. Louis southeast to the bluffs for coal, and the other had only a length of two miles east from the Illinois River at Naples, intending to stretch river communication from that small city of less than 500 inhabitants towards the center of the state.

Charles Collins, a St. Louis business man, was the promoter of the Naples Road. It was started in 1836 in an auspicious manner with a notable of the neighborhood, George Plant, driving the first spike at the river town. The line was extended only two miles towards the bluffs because swampy land rendered further work under Collins' resources inadvisable. On the Fourth of July, 1837, the little stretch was finished, and a ceremony was held in honor of the first running of the old four-wheeler which had been equipped with flanged wheels and was styled "The Coach." Horses pulled the vehicle and before a large crowd, fiery young Richard Yates of Jacksonville pronounced well wishes for the road's success. The Naples Road was laid on four-by-six wooden rails. Between a poor trade and equally bad construction and facilities, its failure was inevitable until it was later absorbed by the Naples and Jacksonville Railroad Company which the following year was merged with the Northern Cross Line under the flamboyant state internal improvements scheme of the late 'Thirties. The Northern Cross Line missed Naples, and the two miles were used only for wagons until 1847, when the Sangamon and Morgan County Railroad Line bought the Northern Cross right-of-way and re-located the path of the locomotive across the river at Naples, where the line has since stood. Collins was later a contractor on a stretch of the Northern Cross between Meredosia and Jacksonville, and, still in command of his visionary sense, tried to establish a town of Morgan at the top of the bluffs, a community which never flourished. Peck, in his "Gazette of Illinois" in 1836, noted signs of building a railroad at the Illinois River at Naples, and in his next edition a year later told of incorporation proceedings for a line from Pittsfield to Louisiana, Missouri, which probably would have been a continuation of the Naples Line.

The other early project to build a railroad was fostered by Ex-Gov. John Reynolds and other capitalists who owned coal in the Illinois bluffs a half-dozen miles from St. Louis, and possessed the intervening land. Reynolds and his friends got an engineer's estimate on a road to cross the American Bottom to his coal. A figure, which proved to be only half the cost, led them to construct the road in the season 1837. Governor Reynolds proudly relates in "My Own Times" how a lake 2,000 feet wide was bridged, when three pilings were driven on top of one another eighty feet into the mud for a bridge footing. The building season closed before the arrival of rails or a locomotive, so horses were used profitably on the roadbed to bring many a ton of coal to the river for transportation. The road was known later as the Coal-Mine Bluff Railroad, and crossed Prairie du Pont Creek. In 1838 the owners decided to sell, doing so at a price which lost them close to \$20,000 on the project. The line later went through changes, but still exists on the same route, as a short coal road—the St. Louis and Ohio River Line.



RICHARD YATES
Illinois Civil War Governor

THOUGHTS TURN TO A STATE SYSTEM

But these efforts were like amateur tries at a big game. Pennsylvania and Indiana were prominent among states farther east who were bending state efforts to public works and it soon became a general feeling in Illinois and in the Legislature that some set of public internal improvements must be made under state supervision and capital. That this scheme should ripen into the overburdening financial strain that it did never seemed possible in 1836-1837, but a few years later the mistakes of jumping into a newly-found and costly venture became apparent and keenly felt. While the railroad program covered the entire state, many of the lines proposed were contained within the limits of the Illinois River Valley.

Sidney Breese had proposed a statewide program in 1835, and during the 1835-36 session of the Legislature, Sen. Cyrus Edwards of Madison County offered for the approval of the solons another set of internal improvements. His plans included a railroad from the Indiana state line which would bring contact with the Wabash and Erie Canal across to Decatur, Springfield, and Quincy; a line from the termination of the Illinois-Michigan Canal through Bloomington to Decatur; and a third road from Alton through Edwardsville and Equality to Shawneetown. To finance these, Edwards proposed state loans to the companies undertaking the labors, and state subscription of one-third the capital, if the incorporators could guarantee two-thirds. The state would also reserve the right to buy out the companies. Apparently all his colleagues were not satisfied with three railroads, and a week later he offered an amending resolution which provided for a Bloomington-Decatur line to connect the canal with the Wabash and Mississippi and the Alton and Springfield lines. His intention was a possible continuance of the line to Springfield and Vandalia later. At any rate, the proposals were passed haphazardly.

The charters to form companies for the projects Edwards had sponsored varied as greatly as the legal authorities who drew them up. Some provided possible state ownership at any later date at either an appraised value or cost plus interest, or in some cases cumulative interest. Several allowed legislative regulation of profits, and a forfeiture clause for tardy construction. The central road from the canal was limited by a regulation of tolls and purchase right after twenty-five years. In the capital subscription clauses, the amount was often limited, an income limit placed, and a few were permitted increase of capital. The Mississippi, Springfield, and Carrollton, one of the ambitious corporations of the time was the only one compelled to have ten per cent of its capital paid in. But so far the only intention of these railroad lines was to connect cities far apart, and the builders-to-be did not see that a transportation line in

eastern Illinois for instance, would succeed only if located in that section whose farm lands needed an outlet for their products. Consequently, Senator Edwards' program was doomed to failure.

Stephen A. Douglas, already prominent in Morgan County in 1836, became interested in public improvements and suggested a set of transportation lines he deemed necessary for the state's welfare. He proposed a central railroad from the Illinois-Michigan Canal to the mouth of the Ohio River, one from Quincy to the Wabash and Erie Canal, completion of the Illinois-Michigan Canal, the improvement of the Illinois-Michigan Canal, the improvement of the Illinois and Wabash rivers, and surveys on other necessary work. This was to be done at the state's expense, on a loan financed by state credit, the debt to be floated by the sale of bonds on canal lands.

IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM LAUNCHED

The Legislature elected in August, 1836, was stimulated by an internal improvements convention, meeting at the seat of government, Vandalia, and designed to weld all the ideas into a practical system. When the legislators assembled at Vandalia in early December, 1836, the most absorbing topic was internal improvements. Stirred by the action of the convention, a joint committee from both houses on internal improvements was set up to examine the expedience of railroad and river improvements. Edwards Smith, of Warsaw, was named chairman, and in a month's time the group was ready to report. The chairman spoke in the house January 9, 1837, sounding an optimistic note on the state's future if improvements were adopted. The committee asked a state loan of \$800,000 for preliminaries. Cost of the railroads was estimated at \$8,000 a mile, and the committee suggested that work be commenced on them at all intersections of navigable streams and at all terminals, construction to proceed in both directions.

The committee members thought they had stretched their power to lay out the plan for so many improvements, but the Legislature soon eclipsed their ambitious plans. The original system was to include (1) a central railroad, Cairo to La Salle, thence to Galena at \$3,500,000; (2) a Southern Cross Railroad, Alton to Mt. Carmel, at \$1,600,000; (3) a Northern Cross Railroad, Quincy to the Indiana state line, at \$1,850,000. The two latter lines were called "northern" and "southern" because at that time a preponderance of the state's population was downstate. One hundred thousand dollars was to be expended on the Great Wabash, Illinois and Rock rivers, \$50,000 on the Kaskaskia and Little Wabash streams.

Sectionalism in the Legislature flared up immediately when some

members found the system left their constituents without a handy railroad. The house tacked on to the report an extension to the central railroad which would take it to the Illinois-Michigan Canal, and an Alton-Shawneetown Line, the pair to cost \$1,600,000; a branch of the central line from Hillsboro via Shelbyville and Charleston to Terre Haute at \$650,000; a line from Peoria by Macomb and Carthage to Warsaw, at \$700,000; Alton to Hillsboro, and the central road at \$600,000; and a line from Belleville via Lebanon to intersect the Southern Cross, at a cost of \$150,000.

Although the governor and the council of revision returned the bill without their approval, the House passed it and the senate concurred after adding a \$350,000 appropriation for a railroad from Bloomington to Mackinaw, and thence to Pekin, and providing that \$200,000 should be pro-rated among counties receiving no railroad line.

"Log-rolling" in its finest form was resorted to for passage of the measure. Proponents of the Illinois-Michigan Canal had to support the measure to insure their pet project, Alton was named a terminal on three railroads to induce signing, and the so-called "Long Nine" (nine tall legislators from Sangamon) proceeded to annex the state capital to Springfield as their price. White County's representatives protested the system and charged "log-rolling" methods. Governor Ford declared that, if under the Constitution of 1818 then in force, the governor had possessed the veto power the wild scheme could have been frustrated.

Execution of the system was entrusted to two bodies, a Board of Fund Commissioners for financing and a Board of Commissioners of Public Works. Both houses chose Charles Oakley, M. M. Rawlings, and Thomas Mather as fund commissioners, and they handled millions of dollars on a bond of only \$50,000. They were to get money from the sale of stocks, from the sale of state lands, from loans, land tax, and other sources. The Commissioners of Public Works were a body of seven, one from each judicial district, elected biennially by a joint vote of the Assembly. They were bonded at \$20,000 and not allowed to have more than that much in their hands at any one time. They were to superintend and construct all public works for the state except the canal.

The commissioners had to keep secret with the engineers the routes proposed for the railroads to prevent the land from being entered by private parties. They were to build the railroads immediately and the state was to enter any vacant lands within five miles of the probable routes. All roads were to be started in both directions from the important terminals and navigable streams—one of the biggest errors of the whole system.

While the Board of Fund Commissioners sought loans and raised money in eastern financial centers, the Public Works Commission divided

the state into three districts and apportioned work on the roads. One hundred and five miles were to be constructed on the Northern Cross, sixty-nine and one-half on the Illinois Central, twenty-four on the Peoria and Warsaw, fifteen on the Alton and Shawneetown, thirty-eight on the Alton and Mt. Carmel, thirty-three on the Alton and Shelbyville, and nine and one-half on the Bloomington and Pekin. The Northern Cross received such a large share because Senator Vance of Vermillion County had made his vote for passage conditional upon starting work on that route first. The commissioners totaled the entire mileage at 1,341 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles, the cost to be \$11,470,444.50, or slightly more than the estimated cost because the roads were to be longer than originally intended. The commissioners drew \$1,143,027 from the fund commissioners up to December, 1838, and due to the fact that they were poor managers and feverish bargainers, little actual work had resulted.

Loans were hard to secure in 1837, with the nation in the throes of a panic. A ten per cent discount was prevalent on loans and another one per cent was awarded the fund commissioners. Railroad iron was extremely high and construction costly. Governor Duncan, retiring in 1838, predicted failure for the system. But the incoming governor, Thomas Carlin, spoke favorably of the start made, and with that encouragement the Legislature added a \$1,000,000 appropriation in 1839, largely for additions to the system.

In the summer of 1837 the Board of Public Works put five parties in the field examining feasible routes preparatory to grading the right-of-ways on the several lines of railroad. The operating clause that the Northern Cross should be first constructed enabled work on that line to be started in that summer. Gen. Murray McConnell of Jacksonville was chosen in March, 1837, as one of the Board of Public Works, and he put in James M. Bucklin as chief engineer, the same man who six years before had recommended a railroad in place of the Illinois-Michigan Canal. The survey began between Meredosia and Jacksonville May 11, 1837, and in four months a fifty-five mile road from Meredosia to Springfield had been laid out, and the commissioners were ready to let contracts. This line was designed to connect water transportation on the Illinois River to Jacksonville and ultimately eastward to the Sangamon River which that generation hoped to render navigable.

FIRST LOCOMOTIVE IN THE WEST

On July 10, 1837, contracts were closed with four men for the two divisions between Springfield and Meredosia, one of the contractors being Charles Collins. They were to build the line at \$8,430 a mile and furnish the locomotive and cars at cost. Construction was begun August 1, 1837,



MAIN STREET, LOOKING EAST, HAVANA

when, amid speeches, the first ground was broken at Meredosia. After the route was graded, the first rail was laid May 9, 1838. By November 8, eight miles of road had been laid from Meredosia towards Jacksonville and on that date the first locomotive ever to move west of the Alleghanies carried a small party over that short stretch.

McConnell had ordered a locomotive for the line but the one he specified was either lost or waylaid, for it was never found. He received instead the engine intended for the Bloomington and Mackinaw Railroad, which line was not ready for locomotion at the time. It was sent from New York by sea to New Orleans, on a boat to St. Louis, and then up the Illinois River to Meredosia. The freight charges were \$1,000. McConnell had it rolled off onto the tracks and an engineer named Joseph Fields set it up. On the day of the first ride the "Rogers," as the eight-and-one-half-ton locomotive was named, drew a car containing Ex-Governor Duncan, McConnell, George Plant, a civil engineer, four contractors and Jonathan Neely as conductor.

The road had been constructed by first grading the line with as many fills and "cuts" as the finances and engineering of the time would allow. Then mud-sills of timber were laid down, and cross ties were placed atop these. On these were wooden rails, topped with a strap-iron rail, two and one-half inches wire, five-eighths inches thick, and weighing thirteen pounds to the yard. This line was finished to Jacksonville by December 1, 1839, and began to operate a month later.

There were numerous anecdotes arising from the operations of this first steam railroad in the valley. On an early excursion trip from Jacksonville to Meredosia, most of the day was spent traversing the distance of twenty-four miles to Meredosia, and when the train crew found their little locomotive was having difficulty climbing the bluffs on the return trip, they uncoupled the cars and set out for home without passengers and cars. An Irishman who acted as engineer on the first section found to his discomfort that a bull belonging to a farmer near the top of the bluffs continually interrupted his progress. With true native spirit, one day he ran into the animal full steam and knocked it into a ditch, bruising it. The farmer retaliated by soaping the rails, and the engineer found himself at a dead standstill on the next trial at the climb. Because of that Morgan County people called the train the "Bullgine."

The rest of the route to Springfield was contracted for on condition that the men would take warrants or bonds in lieu of payment. Already the pinch of low finances was beginning to be felt. The cost of the twenty-four miles to Jacksonville was found to have been nearly two and one-half times the first estimate, while the road during the first month of operation showed \$3,645 expenses and \$3,756 earnings.

In 1841 the state treasurer reported that \$317,380 had been spent

on the railroad from Jacksonville to Springfield, and yet it was not finished. At that time, nearly \$5,000,000 had gone out of the public purse for the state system, with only this small portion of the Northern Cross completed. A bill of February 26, 1841, enabled Governor Ford to apply another \$100,000 of state money to finish the twenty-five miles of road from Meredosia to Springfield, which was done May 13, 1842. As the road was running at a loss, it was leased for a yearly price of \$10,300, a trivial rental considering the fact that its cost had approached \$1,000,000.

The Legislature in 1843 provided for sale of the road. But another problem arose when no buyer appeared to take the "white elephant." C. Ludlin and D. Baxter leased it at the price of \$100 monthly, but by 1845 the line had run down and when a locomotive became derailed at New Berlin, there it rested until an ambitious farmer tried to get it to Alton over a turnpike. The general condition of the road was bad, and in the next two years people along the route confiscated rails, timbers and everything they could find, so that even mules drawing freight found passage none too smooth. On April 26, 1847, the road was sold at auction to N. H. Ridgely, of Springfield. He was the sole man in bidding until a New Yorker in a nearby barber shop, wiping the lather from his face, came and boosted the bidding until Ridgely bribed him to stop. The final purchase price was \$21,100, a figure only a minor fraction of that which the state had spent upon construction.

Ridgely turned around and made a handsome profit by selling the line to a newly organized Sangamon and Morgan County Railway Company. They re-routed the line to Naples, and on July 22, 1849, opened it for traffic, covering fifty-eight miles in five hours. Their time beat the old Northern Cross, which made a round trip from Jacksonville to Meredosia daily. The line later merged into different companies, out of which evolved the present Wabash system. To the credit of the original engineers, it may be stated that the Wabash line now passes over almost exactly the same roadbed and grade as that conceived by Murray McConnell, with the exception of skirting Jacksonville. At the insistence of citizens there, McConnell located the track through the town, but when smoke and cinders flew in all directions, the town's mind changed quickly, and the route was re-located in 1849.

STATE SYSTEM COLLAPSES

Meanwhile work had been progressing even more slowly on other sections of the Internal Improvements System. Grading only had been completed on most of them. Today many of the same roadbeds built almost a century ago adorn the countrysides of Illinois. The early builders had fantastic ideas when, for instance, they proposed to surmount a 200-foot bluff at Quincy with an inclined plane road over a mile long, instead

of skirting the bluff and entering the city on the level. These graded right-of-ways may well be called tombstones of their early makers, who plunged huge sums of the state's money into construction, until lack of finances and other circumstances controlling the purse strings brought the state up short with the realization that a good thing had been stupendously overdone.

But amid it all southern Illinois sat serene, for it was that section which had fostered the system in an effort to hinder lake settlement from transferring political power to the northern portion of the state. The Illinois Central was the especial pet of the southern counties, and although its many branches were surveyed and graded, little actual construction was undertaken at the time. Cairo was looked to as a future metropolis, when and if Great Lakes commerce would be directed to it via the Illinois Central.

Politics crept into the situation. The Democrats claimed the Whigs were hostile, and the latter party in defense gave its sanction to railroad building, but only on condition that it be left to private enterprise. Abraham Lincoln suggested speculation in unsold lands instead of taxes to gain money and relieve the situation.

Additional work was allowed in 1839, and the Legislature proclaimed a general taxation law of twenty cents on each \$100 worth of property. This action led to widespread protest. A special legislative session was demanded which Governor Carlin called for December 9, 1839. The Board of Fund Commissioners had made some unfortunate investments in New York, and now they had to go to London for more loans. Governor Carlin had found the state bearing a debt of \$21,746,444, with interest at \$1,310,776, while revenue amounted to the minute sum of \$200,000.

The newly convened Legislature was essentially of the same composition as that which passed the bill two years before, yet they revoked it by abolishing both the Board of Fund Commissioners and that of Public Works. No more money was to be borrowed and accounts were ordered audited. Those roads or portions which were completed were to be operated. The exact figures indicated \$5,614,000 had been poured into improvements. Although A. D. Jones in his map in "Illinois and the Far West" (1838) shows several railroads as completed, only grading and light construction work had been done on most of them. A great start had been made all over the system but there was little finished work.

When one considers the faults of the system and the financial stringency of the times, it is remarkable that the system advanced as far as it did during those disastrous years. Construction was to begin at many points, requiring large amounts of labor and doubling of work. The assessed valuation of the entire state was only \$50,000,000. A panic swept the country and the state bank was closed. Carlin really tried to find a more

economical method to complete the work and salvage a part of the venture, but it was all nullified. Ex-Governor Reynolds and Senator Young had supplanted two of the Fund Commissioners in 1838, and had made several bad moves, while a Whig assembly had added nearly a \$1,000,000 worth of improvements to the original plan.

After 1839 the problem of paying the huge debt arose. By July, 1841, the burden was insupportable and Illinois defaulted on her interest payments for several years, while bolder men suggested repudiation, as Indiana had done when internal improvements carried her too far. The poor financing reflected itself in the way the emigrants shunned the state in the 1840-1850 decade. Population increase was 185 per cent for 1820-1830, 202 for 1830-1840; and only eighty-three for 1840-1850. In the next decade, 1850-1860, it rose again to 101.

A PICTURE OF EARLY RAILROADING

While railroad building all over the state found an impasse in the decade following 1839 and the only segment then completed, the fifty-five miles of the Northern Cross, was falling into disrepair, let us consider the type of trains, the service offered, and how the facilities of railroading were keeping pace. A House report of 1839 told that a man with a horse spent sixteen and one-half dollars for a 100-mile journey, while it cost thirteen dollars on the railroad. The saving for hauling a ton of freight 100 miles was fifteen dollars by train as against a team and wagon, emphasizing economic advantage. The minimum rate of transportation was not less than one dollar a hundredweight or twenty dollars a ton, before the railroad, while after that it amounted to five dollars. The Sangamon and Morgan County Railroad officials figured they could realize \$144 a trip from twenty passengers each way at five cents a mile and estimated the freight receipts from such a trip at \$120. Added to this was \$25.00 for the transportation of the United States mail. Taken from this must be the \$131 estimated repairs and expenses, which left a daily profit of \$158.

When Stephenson's first steam locomotive appeared on the Stockton and Darlington Railroad in England in 1825, no one thought that in a few years this machine would make so many important changes before its introduction into North America. But from the time that Peter Cooper's "Tom Thumb" traveled the tracks of the Baltimore & Ohio Road in the United States, there were constant improvements and soon there was evolved one with a swivel truck and two driving wheels, a creation peculiarly American. The first locomotive sent to the Northern Cross Road was a typical model, with a horizontal wood-burning boiler



LA SALLE STREET, LOOKING SOUTH, OTTAWA



CITY HALL, LA SALLE

and two flimsy cylinders. Often passengers had to stop and help load wood at the fueling stations en route.

The early strap rails were a far cry from the present "T" rail of steel, which was not used in Illinois until 1863. There was no satisfactory method of joining the ends of the strap rails and often the weight of the cars would separate these ends, until they stuck up slightly. When they protruded past the center of the wheels, a train traveling at fifteen miles an hour—a good gait in 1840—would naturally propel this "snake-head," as it was called, into the car, with several recorded fatal results. Bridges were at first flimsy wooden things subject to fire. *Harper's Weekly* caricatures a frightened passenger asking the brakeman, "Think we'll make the bridge tonight?" to which the brakeman replied, "The engineer is putting on steam and I think we'll get the engine and tender over."

There were few fills in the early days, and the existence of bumpy roads with sharp curves led to many accidents in the fifteen years between 1845 and 1860. Added to this danger was the discomfort of chain couplings a yard long which jerked passengers out of their seats, and the "piling up" which occurred before automatic air brakes were put into use. Cars were originally stage coaches set upon axles and wheels, and later they were converted into what approached our modern railway coaches. In the early days even tickets were varied and easily forged, and the all too common pass made executives worry over the fate of their roads.

Construction of railroads really meant a change in national feeling. Before their arrival, waterways had made north and south transportation the keynote of western American life. East and West became joined when the iron rails began extending from the Atlantic, a fact which served to irritate the ante-bellum south. The early Erie Road had planned its terminal at St. Louis, but with the construction of the Rock Island through northern Illinois to Rock Island, Chicago became the western railway center.

VALLEY FEELS NEED OF RAILROADS

While national railroading was tending to bring sections together, the counties along the Illinois River found themselves more in accord by reason of their water connection. However, more than a few miles back from the river, farming was not so profitable unless a handy stream afforded means for floating products to a water market. The valley needed a system of crossroads to bring outlying sections in closer communication with the river, and a central road down the state was bound to mean much in an economic sense. Until Illinois recuperated from the

ill effects of the 1837-39 fiasco in internal improvements, the short Meredosia-Springfield Railroad remained the only line in the valley. Before much progress in building railroads could be effected, it was necessary to give up the idea of a statewide system developed by "log-rolling" legislation. None of the common means of transportation in use in 1849 was effective the year round, and busy commerce needed the iron horse to draw it.

The Illinois-Michigan Canal was finally finished in 1848, having been pushed to completion in the decade when railroads were still regarded as the cause of financial woes. After the canal was opened the upper Illinois River counties found commerce increased. Chicago attracted the grain raised in the Illinois Valley unless St. Louis could increase the Chicago price from five to eight cents a bushel, as the all-water routes on river, canal, and lakes afforded that much advantage. It was not until 1852, when the Michigan Southern and Northern Indiana Road was built, that an eastern rail connection was given Chicago, and then only light things were handled as freight.

The promise of railroad construction came with the telegraph, which made its bow in Illinois in 1848. An act of February 9, 1849, in the Legislature provided for a state network, and by 1850 wire communication existed pretty generally all over the state. But by the middle of the century thirty-six counties with two-fifths of the population, all in central Illinois, found they had only mud roads, and demanded better transportation. The east central counties and all land twenty miles from railroads were valueless, while one-third of the land still belonged to the government.

As Illinois again became railroad minded, the people were compelled to choose between the two plans. One was to connect with the Atlantic trunks, and then have north and south lines, and roads from river to river. The other was the so-called "state policy," which favored keeping Illinois a unit to itself by tying up the points in the state, keeping the terminals away from St. Louis, and placing them instead at Alton, to make a metropolis which would take the upper Mississippi away from St. Louis.

The "state policy" men believed that to give St. Louis trade and thus aid Missouri was hostile to the state's interests, but their opponents met at Salem in June, 1849, to publicize their ideas. The "state policy" adherents retaliated by calling a meeting at Hillsboro, in Montgomery County, July 20, 1849. Alton sponsored a meeting in October to keep prospective termini at that city. Missouri retaliated with a law taxing extra-state products and the wrath of the "state policy" proponents knew no bounds. But outside of the state, general feeling was that Illinois retarded the nation's growth by prohibiting the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad, from Cincinnati on to St. Louis.

In its very narrow nature, the "state policy" was doomed. In January, 1851, the Legislature met and gave numerous railroad charters, among them being one to the Ohio and Mississippi Company for a line from Illinoistown (now East St. Louis) to Terre Haute. The Atlantic and Mississippi Railroad, wanting a line from Terre Haute to St. Louis via Vandalia, was still left out as conflicting with Alton's interests, and other charters were denied. Another convention was called at Salem, November 25, 1853, by men opposing the "state policy" and they petitioned the governor for a special session. He refused but when the regular session met in February, 1854, many charters were granted private enterprises and the "state policy" collapsed entirely.

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE CREATES RAIL NETWORK

As the old and selfish policy of making the state a separate unit dissolved before economic needs, all along the river valley, across it, and in many other parts of the state, railroads sprang into being through the efforts of private enterprise. Consider them separately and one finds in the end that a fine transportation system was afforded Illinois, a network which by 1860 could match the facilities of almost any other state. In view of the utter ineffectiveness of the schemes of the two preceding decades, the intense activity which took place in the 'Fifties becomes an epic of railroad building which, even in this day of advanced engineering, may be looked upon with great respect.

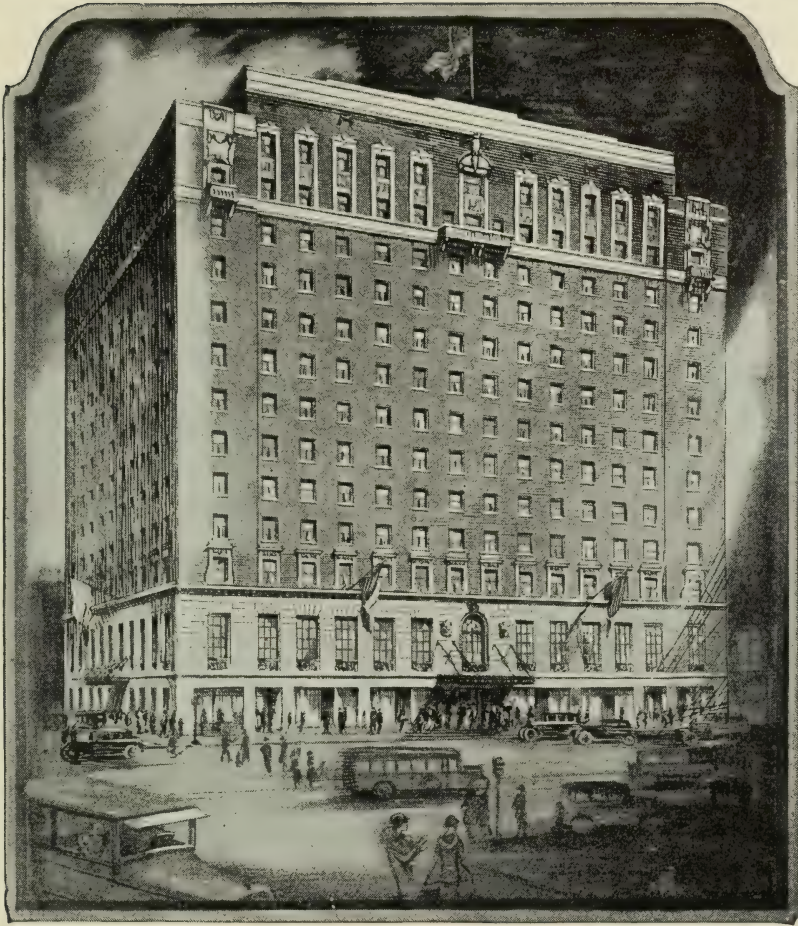
Aided materially in its financing by a generous Federal land grant, yet constructed nevertheless by a private corporation, the Illinois Central was the most important single system that resulted from this period, reaching as it did from the extreme southern tip of the state into the northwest and northeast corners. Because of the prominent part its building and operation have played in valley history and in the growth of the whole state, the Illinois Central will be reserved for special consideration.

In the northern part of the state, the Galena and Chicago Union signalized the railroad building splurge of the busy 'Fifties. This company had originally been chartered in 1836 and had graded for trackage in 1837, then ceased activities for ten years until it was revived under an amended charter in 1847. By the end of the following year, ten miles of track had been laid to the Des Plaines River at a cost of \$405,000. In 1852 the road had been extended as far as Belvidere and Rockford and in 1853 to Freeport. The latter served for a time as the western terminus, the Illinois Central being used from that point to Galena. The Galena and Chicago Union, however, soon projected an air-line extending almost due west to Fulton on the Mississippi. This road was completed

in 1856 and proved a highly profitable venture, carrying river products to Chicago in exchange for eastern goods. Both the original line to Freeport and the air-line to Fulton in time became a unit of the Chicago & North Western System.

One of the big railroads now in operation in numerous counties of the valley is the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy. But it was only by piecemeal construction and absorption of other lines that this great system was evolved to its present state. The C. B. & Q. indeed had a comparatively humble inception as the Aurora Branch Railroad, chartered in 1849 and later changed to the Chicago & Aurora. This company began operations in 1850 over the tracks of the Galena and Chicago from the metropolis on the lake to Turner Junction and thence over its own line from the latter point a distance of thirteen miles to Aurora. Westward extensions were created by the construction of forty-three miles of track to Mendota in 1853 and the absorption of the Central Military Tract Road, extending eighty miles from Mendota to Galesburg, in 1856. This was the same year contact with Quincy was made by acquiring at a foreclosure sale the 100-mile Northern Cross Line between Quincy and Galesburg, so styled because it followed the original Northern Cross route from the Mississippi as far as Camp Point and thence branched northward. The next important link was by acquisition of the Peoria and Oquawka Railroad, extending through Galesburg and giving connection with the Mississippi at Burlington, Iowa. Thus the road became the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy. With the passing years, other lines were added, including the several important north-and-south branches passing through many counties of the valley.

About the same time the C. B. & Q. was extending its lines and branches, another system was being pushed across the state from Chicago to the Mississippi, to become a link in a great transcontinental route. This was the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific, which had its start under a charter granted the Rock Island and La Salle Company in 1847 and amended to the Peru and Rock Island in 1851. Trains were put in operation between Chicago and Joliet in October, 1852, and by March of the following year, the 100-mile stretch had been completed to Peru, the western terminus of the Illinois-Michigan Canal. New records for speed in track-laying were set in extending the line on westward. At a rate of a mile a day and at a total cost of \$4,500,000, the road was completed to Rock Island on February 22, 1854, thus closing the final link of steel between the Atlantic and the Mississippi. Meanwhile, the forty-seven-mile line between Peoria and Bureau Junction was started in 1854 and under a perpetual lease became a unit of the Rock Island system, as did later the branch between Peoria and Rock Island, extending a distance



HOTEL PERE MARQUETTE, PEORIA

of ninety-seven miles through Stark and Henry counties. It is to be noted that the main line of the Rock Island parallels waterways its entire length across the state, following the courses of the Illinois-Michigan Canal, the Illinois River and the Hennepin Canal.

Together, these various roads had an immediate effect upon the development of the northern part of the valley. Depot receipts on all lines showed that the farmers were taking advantage of the freight facilities. Building materials came west and land prices skyrocketed. Population in the Military Tract area between the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers grew 250 per cent in response to the fine transportation and soon five-sevenths of the area was in tilled farms whose wealth was judged at \$118,000,000.

Meanwhile, the development of the 'Fifties brought important connections to the middle section of the state through the Chicago & Alton system. Trackage was completed between Alton and Springfield in 1853, and, at a cost of \$5,500,000, was extended to Joliet by 1856. When this line reached Normal, it marked the first connection of southern Illinois with the East, via the Illinois Central to La Salle and the Rock Island line to Chicago and the eastern roads. In 1857, the Joliet & Chicago Railroad, just recently built, joined the Alton line to make a continuous belt between St. Louis and Chicago, via Alton and Springfield. The road, after several changes in names and ownership, finally became known as the Chicago & Alton and during the Civil war went into receivership. For almost seventy years, this line was operated by a receiver until finally, in 1930, it was sold at auction to the Baltimore & Ohio.

The original Northern Cross line, the sole remnant of the unfruitful internal improvement system of 1837, was resurrected as the Sangamon and Morgan County Railroad in 1849 and placed in use between Springfield and Naples. After much consolidation and absorption of connecting lines, it finally became a part of the Wabash system, giving outlets to the Mississippi at several points and serving the towns of the middle Illinois and Sangamon River regions.

To provide a route directly across state from St. Louis, the Ohio & Mississippi Railroad was chartered in 1851 and by May, 1857, it had constructed a 438-mile line to Cincinnati, of which 146 miles were in Illinois. In 1875 this line was reorganized as a part of the Illinois & Southeastern but later passed into possession of the Baltimore & Ohio, as did a line, 228 miles long, between Beardstown and Shawneetown. The latter was created by a consolidation in 1869 of the Pana, Springfield & Northwestern with the Illinois & Southeastern.

Another road across the southern part of the state was the Terre Haute & Alton completed in 1856, five years after it was chartered. After

some years of financial struggles, this line of 172 miles passed into the hands of the Big Four (Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland & St. Louis). Other holdings of the Big Four in Illinois include the line from Peoria to Indianapolis via Bloomington and Champaign, which began as the La Fayette, Bloomington & Mississippi with eighty-one miles built in 1871, becoming the Lake Erie & Western in 1880, after which it was extended the forty-five remaining miles to Peoria.

Thus it will be seen that numerous lines, originally built within the state as independent ventures, in time became divisions of vast interstate systems. This, however, was not always true. In a few detached cases, small roads have been able to survive. As an example, one which has always contained itself within the state is the Toledo, Peoria & Western, although it has, to be sure, fitted itself into the national transportation picture as a link in freight traffic between the eastern and western roads. The T. P. & W. cuts almost directly across Illinois from the Mississippi at Keokuk, Iowa, through Peoria, to the Indiana state line at Effner, a distance of 230 miles. Chartered in 1863 as the Toledo, Peoria & Warsaw, its construction was completed in 1869 with Warsaw as its western terminus. Later, however, a line was built across the Mississippi at Keokuk to give it better connections, and a short branch was built from La Harpe to Iowa Junction whence, over tracks of the C. B. & Q., another connection was established with the Mississippi at Burlington, Iowa. This cross-state road has passed through various periods of financial vicissitudes and bankruptcy and, recently reorganized, it has almost completely abandoned its passenger service and devoted itself to the carriage of freight.

In contrast to the T. P. & W., the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe is still another road across the state which, from its beginning, has been a part of a great transcontinental system and has never sought local traffic, either in the freight or passenger divisions. Its 295-mile route in Illinois extends from the Mississippi at Fort Madison, Iowa, diagonally to Chicago, traversing Peoria and Marshall counties and spanning the Illinois River at Chillicothe.

The roads which have been mentioned are sufficient to show the evolution of rail transportation in the valley and state. To attempt to list all of the lines built between 1850 and the close of the nineteenth century would be as tedious as it would be incomplete.

THE STORY OF THE ILLINOIS CENTRAL

Although all parts of Illinois were blessed by the coming of the railroad, probably the east central part profited more spectacularly from the building of the Illinois Central. The Illinois River Valley had always had the limited facilities of the river but the old corduroy roads in the

great prairie counties to the east were practically worthless, and settlers sometimes resorted to Indian trails for better travel. Spring was the worst season, when every road was a bog of mud and all farmers were isolated. The ton-mile cost of freighting was prohibitive, and much acreage remained unoccupied.

Southern Illinois wanted to be joined with these counties, and their pet scheme was a central railroad from Cairo through the middle of this region. As far back as 1850, Governor Coles had proposed a canal down the middle of the state, but Lieutenant-Governor A. M. Jenkins in 1832 had a more feasible plan, that of a railroad. So in 1836 there was issued a charter to the Illinois Central Railroad Company, with Daniel Holbrook as leader, and Sidney Breese, a strong advocate. Breese, in a letter of October 16, 1835, had suggested a line from Ottawa to Cairo, to be built on state credit subsidized by land grants. The proposed path lay down the third principal meridian. He even suggested a branch through eastern Illinois, with a total length for the whole road of 300 to 350 miles, at a cost of \$2,500,000. The *Sangamon Journal*, an influential paper, commented upon the plan October 31, and two weeks before that Breese had addressed a group in Shelby County urging backing.

But the internal improvements system of 1837 changed the plans by proposing Cairo and Galena as the termini. Construction cost was estimated at \$3,500,000. Urgent efforts to begin work resulted in grading along the right-of-way at several places, and even iron and a locomotive were ordered in 1838, before the scheme collapsed. A commercial report of 1838 estimated the cost of the road at \$8,326 a mile for the 437 miles, but when finally built and equipped it cost almost seven times the estimate.

When the early construction was suspended nothing had been accomplished beyond isolated sections of graded right-of-way, none of which was ready for trains. On March 6, 1843, hope for a great north-and-south line seemed to revive when the Great Western Railway Company was incorporated to build a railroad from Cairo to the canal through Vandalia, Shelbyville, Decatur, and Bloomington. They were to recompense Illinois for work already done, and one-fourth of the net income was to go to the state after the railroad had paid for itself. This charter was repealed March 2, 1845, but re-granted on April 13, 1849, to the same group, with a right-of-way surveyed at state expense. A certain sum was required to be expended yearly, and the governor was to hold in trust any land given the state for the work. An embarrassing note came into matters when the company holding this charter was found to be of the same composition as that of the Cairo City and Canal Company, a group formed in 1835 to boom Cairo. As a result, when the charter was re-granted in 1849 thirty new incorporators of state-wide fame were added

to extend the route from La Salle to Chicago. Darius B. Holbrook was the leader of both the Cairo City and Canal Company and the Great Western Company, so the charter has come to be known as the "Holbrook Charter."

The whole state was hoping Congress would give Illinois a land grant for this railroad line. This form of Federal aid to help states construct improvements was not new. Stephen A. Douglas was then in the Senate and through his activity the grant was finally authorized by Congress in 1850. Douglas had almost completed the deal in 1849, when the Great Western Company by its new charter induced the state to cede to it all Federal lands which might come to the state for this purpose. Douglas hurried home, got Holbrook to renounce the charter, and the land was awarded to the state of Illinois. Holbrook released his rights December 24, 1849, the Douglas grant went through Congress September 20, 1850, and Illinois accepted it by act of the Legislature December 17, 1851. Southern and western opposition threatened to block Douglas' measure until it was made to provide grants in Alabama and Mississippi so that the line might run through to the Gulf.

The land grant, a most generous donation of 2,500,000 acres, was in two forms. One gave the state a 200-foot right-of-way from the end of the Illinois-Michigan Canal to the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and also provided for branches to Chicago and Galena. In addition to this, the main body of the grant was alternate sections of land designated by even numbers for six sections deep on each side of the trunk line and branches. For such land which had already been sold or preempted in this section enough might be taken from the even-numbered sections to a distance of fifteen miles on either side of the track to compensate. The bill provided for construction from both ends and completion within ten years, or unsold land would revert to the United States. The line was to be a public highway for the government. This donation included land in forty-seven counties, and was equal to ten counties of 400 square miles each. Titles were completed in 1852, and the land was grouped in four classes: (1) 50,000 acres of valuable land for town sites or minerals, at not less than twenty dollars an acre; (2) 350,000 acres of superior farm land, at not less than fifteen dollars an acre; (3) 1,300,000 acres of fair land, at not less than eight dollars an acre; and (4) the rest at five dollars an acre, lowest price.

Now that the state had the lands, four methods of use suggested themselves: (1) state construction on the 1837 survey; (2) surrender lands to bondholders who would construct it on the same route; (3) let the 1843 Great Western Railway Company complete the job; or (4) transfer the land to a new private concern. The first possibility had a



WEST SIDE OF THE SQUARE, WINCHESTER



PUBLIC SQUARE, WINCHESTER

bad odium from the crash of the internal improvements system, and it was never seriously considered. The second method would be hard and would not guarantee quick construction. Holbrook and his company wanted to do the job, but finally an eastern concern was awarded the rights and the land, but not without legislative and public debate on the route, termini, and other matters. La Salle interests wanted the line to run through their town while Bloomington favored a route that would extend her Alton and Sangamon connection to the lakes. Another suggestion was for a main line from Cairo to the canal with a long branch from Mount Vernon to Galena and Dubuque, Iowa. Legislative decree directed that the divergence of the lines be anywhere north of thirty-nine degrees and thirty minutes.

While the public thought the Great Western Company's offer good, the state was loath to turn over so much land to it. Finally when Robert Rantoul and several eastern capitalists offered in January, 1851, to undertake construction and give seven per cent of the gross income to the state, a bill was passed February 10, 1851, incorporating this new Illinois Central Railroad Company. They had before them a project of railroad building twice as long as the largest system extant at that time—the New York & Erie.

The first sale of land by the Illinois Central was at prices ranging from \$2.50 to \$5.00 an acre. Settlement followed and prices rose as more emigrants took sites along the railroad line. In time 30,000 persons were to become purchasers of acreage from this vast grant. The company was quick in getting started. Roswell B. Mason was named chief engineer and came West as rapidly as travel methods of the day would permit. His route was from New York to Albany by steamer, railroad to Buffalo, and steamer to Chicago, the whole trip occupying five days. Soon after his arrival he organized surveying parties, divided the right-of-way into divisions, and ordered 77,000 tons of iron rail in England. The line was to run up from Cairo, branch into two lines at a point in southern Illinois, one to Galena through La Salle and one to Chicago.

Construction bonds, based on the land grants and sold at par financed the road. As 250,000 acres sold for enough to pay the interest, the eastern capitalists were not forced to put up much money to construct the road. However, W. A. Ackerman, early Illinois Central president, in his "Early Illinois Railroads," says that the whole project cost \$25,000,000 and that in 1856 the builders faced a crisis, when the income barely paid expenses. An assignment of property was made in 1857 and in that year Richard Cobden, a British statesman having a large interest in the road, came to Illinois and put the company on a better footing.

The first section of the line under contract was from Chicago to Calumet Station. By the end of 1853 175 miles of track had been laid and

in the summer of 1854 trains ran from Chicago to Urbana along that branch, although early travelers reported going twenty miles through the north central counties without seeing a tree, a house, or any signs of life.

The main line of 300.99 miles, from Cairo to La Salle, was ready on January 8, 1855. The Galena branch, from La Salle to Dunleith on the Mississippi was completed June 12, of the same year, adding 146.73 miles, and on September 27, 1856, the last rail of 705.5 miles of main lines and branches was placed on the ties. Sections had been opened as completed all during the progress of construction, even though only a dozen places of known importance were situated along the tracks. Meanwhile, the state began exacting its seven per cent toll which it still collects.

EFFECT OF RAILROADS

Railroads were one of the biggest factors in the rapid development of Illinois during two decades after 1850. Then only a little more than 100 miles had existed. In the first six years of the fifth decade, Illinois surpassed all other states in railroad construction. The state's trackage jumped from 1,000 miles in February, 1854, to 2,410 in 1855, and 2,761 a year later. In the United States as a whole railroad mileage went from forty miles in 1830 to 2,755 in 1840 and totaled 8,571 in 1870, the biggest decade being 1850-1860, when Illinois enjoyed its splurge of construction. By 1860 the entire state had good rail connections with the East and all the rivers.

The roads found ready usage. Thirty miles an hour was the average speed and the trains maintained regular schedules. Chicago was a dozen hours away from Springfield by train, while Funk and Company's stages took three days and nights. Rates did not exceed three cents a mile, and travel seemed within the reach of all. Mails went faster than ever before. In general it was decided that railroads surpassed water and highway transportation.

The railroads transformed the prairie areas, swamps were drained, sod broken, land cleared, and groves planted. Farm machinery appeared and diversification of crops was introduced. The prairie region increased enormously in population and land values. Desirability of land seemed to be reversed. In 1850, the river land was preferred to prairie land. Inside of a decade the prairie farms stood at a premium.

Merchants soon found their trade territory was expanded. Meanwhile, coal was being mined on an extensive scale now that a method of marketing it was at hand. Towns sprang up in the prairie overnight. The termini of the railroads, especially Chicago and Alton, profited most, when, for instance, Chicago had 104 trains of thirteen railroads reaching

her depots. St. Louis found its trade slipping badly, as the Illinois Central drew eastern Illinois trade to Chicago and the Illinois River Valley poured its products northward over new rail lines rather than downstream by boat as a generation earlier. Only southern Illinois remained tributary to St. Louis.

After the decade of 1850-1860 had passed, numerous smaller companies built short lines of railroads, but the essential trunks to tie up the state were constructed during the first real intensive rush of building. The smaller roads often served to establish communication between towns not on the main line and to cut down distance between points already in rail contact. Their tributary influence to the state's growth was none the less important, and without them the state would be lined with populated strips, instead of a more even spread of population.

In the two decades between 1850 and 1870, the principal features of the state's present railway system were laid down. All large sections of the state were served. Most of the counties increased rapidly in population. The state as a whole doubled in each decade. Many towns were stimulated by the new transportation to great growth. Princeton grew from 778 in 1850 to 3,593 in 1860. Most of the river cities and towns stood still or lost ground except such as had both river and rail facilities. Spring Bay, a river town in Woodford County, rivaled Peoria and Pekin before the iron horse entered the territory, but after that declined. Townships in the same county showed the effect of rail connections. Logan and Tivoli townships in Peoria County, both lacking railroad service, lost a quarter of their populations between 1860 and 1870, while Elmwood township, in the same county, gained a similar percentage in the same period with her railroad connection. Many towns of prominence before the railroad era were eclipsed by rapidly growing neighbors on the rail lines and many such towns passed rapidly into the limbo of dead towns.

A review of railroad development in our region emphasizes a number of conclusive facts. When the mania to build railroads first gripped the state in the early 'Thirties, fabulous schemes by the dozens were formulated and charters were granted promiscuously, but out of it all only two insignificant lines of a few miles length, not even equipped with steam locomotives, were built in the southwestern section. So, too, did the grandiose program of the state government to create an all-inclusive network of rail lines fall down. Upwards of \$5,000,000 of taxpayers' money was expended but the net result was miles of untracked roadbeds and one completed line, twenty-five miles in length, between Meredosia and Springfield. It remained for private enterprise to give Illinois a rail transportation system, but not until the narrow "state policy" of keeping the roads within the bounds of the state had been

abandoned. The decade between 1850 and 1860 became one of intense rail-building activity, and by the time of the Civil war lines were serving practically all sections of the state. With the exception of the Illinois Central, whose 700 odd miles of main line and branches constituted a single project semi-public in nature due to a Federal land grant which aided its financing, most of the roads were built wherever companies could be organized, mainly to serve local needs. But soon economic necessity proved a leavening factor in evolving the system of roads we have today. Gradually these detached lines were joined together, as larger companies absorbed smaller ones, so that they were not only enabled to serve better the interests within the state, but also became units of great interstate and transcontinental roads. Short, independent roads have remained comparatively few and insignificant.

The vast part railroads have played in building up the valley and state, in common with the whole nation, is undisputed. No other single factor has been of greater effect. Now, however, students of transportation are inquiring if the railroad is not approaching the end of its usefulness. Other modes of transportation are, indeed, giving competition in ever-increasing degrees. The years since the World war have had a particularly devastating influence upon the railroad industry. The automobile, bus and truck have made serious inroads into the traffic of the rail lines, and the airplane has become a factor to contend with. Buses have so reduced the local railroad passenger business that innumerable steam trains have been replaced by gas-propelled coaches. Some railroads which were quick enough to sense the trend solved the problem by establishing their own supplementary bus lines. Buses, however, have become more than a menace merely to local traffic. Able to offer service which is cheaper, though slower, than the railroads, they are rapidly extending their cross-country business. Likewise, air transport lines, with high speed as their selling point, have tended to reduce transcontinental travel by railroads. Perhaps even greater losses have been suffered from private automobiles. To a somewhat lesser degree have motor trucks claimed a share of freight business, although so far this has been chiefly on a short-haul basis. The revival of waterways has been another factor which is giving railroad executives concern.

The accusation is often made that the railroads are partly responsible for their dilemma in not keeping apace with the progress of other industries while they still had complete control of the transportation situation. If this is true, late years have seen efforts put forth to remedy the condition. Recent moves of railroads to furnish door-to-door freight service is a gesture to meet motor truck competition. Passenger facilities have been improved to a marked degree. Day coaches are cleaner, better ven-

tilated and more comfortable than those of less than a generation ago, and each succeeding year brings improvements in the service and comforts of sleeping cars. Time schedules have been shortened. Many inducements are offered in the way of reduced rates.

Further consolidation is another means by which the railroads are striving to solve their difficulties. As this is written, plans for merging virtually all the roads between the Atlantic seaboard and the Middle West into four major systems are approaching their final stage. Many strides have already been taken in unifying the control of lines to the West and Northwest, thus reducing overhead and facilitating more efficient service.

Out of the revolution in transportation now taking place, the railroad no doubt will be awarded a dominating position and will continue for generations to come to play a vital part in the destinies of the nation. In the transportation of freight it has the advantage of speed over the waterways and, except for short hauls, over motor trucks. In long-distance passenger traffic it surpasses the bus in speed, and offers comforts which neither the bus nor airplane can match. It is conceivable that the transportation system of the future will use waterways to move bulky freight not requiring rapid transit, buses and trucks to carry passengers and freight short distances, and airplanes for mail, express and passengers when speed is imperative for long distance. All of this will materially alter the status of the railroad and place it almost entirely upon a long-haul basis, but it will still leave it "the backbone of the nation's commerce."

CHAPTER XIV

THE EVOLUTION OF A SCHOOL SYSTEM

Before a uniform public school system was evolved in Illinois, the only facilities for educating the youth were a strange assortment of schools without any semblance of centralized supervision or standards. First came the log-cabin "pay" schools of pioneer days. Then, as settlements emerged from the crudities of frontier life, came the period of the academies. Until the late 'Fifties, the academy, usually started by the church or a group of enterprising citizens, fulfilled with varying degrees of success, the school needs of the average Illinois Valley Community.

Early laws to create public schools were totally ineffective. To the frontiersman, education was one of the cultural niceties subordinated to more vital activities upon which depended the very sustenance of life. The average settler was openly antagonistic to the idea of taxation to support schools, and there were no readily accessible means of utilizing government land grants for educational purposes. As a result, the only schools in those days were the result of local initiative and at best were but crude makeshifts, open a short period during the winter season and giving the boys and girls only a smattering knowledge of the "three R's."

Governor Reynolds attests to the early lack of schools in Illinois in this fashion: "In the county of Randolph there was not a single school or schoolhouse in 1800, except John Doyle, a soldier of the Revolution under General Clark, might have taught a few children in Kaskaskia at or after this period. In the settlement of New Design, an Irishman, not well qualified, called Halfpenny, at this period instructed some pupils. This school was the only one amongst the Americans at this early day. In the American Bottom, perhaps a school might have existed but not long at a time. Under the guidance of the clergy in the French villages at rare intervals, schools were established, but their numbers and efficacy were limited. * * * Before any common school was established in the settlement where my father resided, I mounted a horse nearly every evening during the winter, and rode about a mile and a half to the residence of James Hughes to study under his guidance the arithmetic. * * * About the year 1805, a small school was formed in the settlement where my father resided. I was a scholar at this humble institution during part of the winters, and the wet days we could not work on the farm, for

one or two years. At times the school was not kept for want of teachers. The scarcity of school books was also a great inconvenience. * * * I made arrangements with my father to go all one winter to school. I had raised a colt he gave me, and I gave it to a man to work in my place on the farm while I attended school."

A local historian of Jersey County commented that "in pioneer days" good schools were like angels' visits—"few and far between." And the editor of the *Illinois Intelligencer* appraised these early attempts at education in these unflattering terms: "At least one-third of the schools were really a public nuisance and did the people more harm than good; another third about balanced the account by doing about as much harm as good, and perhaps one-third were advantageous to the community in various degrees."

Such was the quality of the early schools of the Illinois Valley. The first one started in Morgan County is an example. "This was, like all buildings of its day, made of logs; and had no window glass, no stove, and a puncheon floor. The door was hung on wooden hinges, a huge fireplace supplied the heat, and on one side a log was left out and the interstice was covered with greased paper to admit light." Often an abandoned cabin was used, such as was the case described by Jonathan D. Manlove, an early teacher of Schuyler County: "The cabin was the largest in the county, and had been occupied by a family not censurable for the godly virtue of cleanliness, and was infested with a numerous progeny of bugs whose odorous perfume was not pleasant to the olfactories of teacher and pupils. A cabin twelve feet square which had been used as a smokehouse was the first school in Granville, Putnam County. Sometimes a public-spirited citizen would donate a lot, as James Davis did in Cass County, and the men of the neighborhood would get together and 'throw up' a cabin. Only four rough walls and a roof had been provided when the first school in Woodstock township, Schuyler County, was opened, and the teachers and pupils spent their recess time filling the chinks with mud to keep out the winter winds. A door was left on each side of the fireplace of a pioneer school in Pike County so a horse could be led in one and out the other to drag in logs for the fire. Native stone was used to build an early schoolhouse in Greene County. It had no windows but a little dome at the top admitted light and air. Because of its shape it became known as 'The Jug.' Frequently the meeting-house of a community would serve as a school on week days and often the courthouse would be used in county-seat towns."

The furnishings of the schools were as crude as the buildings themselves. The teacher's desk and pupils' benches were usually fashioned from slabs with pegs driven in holes near the ends for legs. Of course, there was no such thing as uniformity of textbooks. Books of all sorts

were scarce in frontier days. Sometimes a few volumes which comprised the teacher's own meagre library were the only ones available. Now and then, parents would supply children with school books they had used in the states from which they had migrated, and these did full duty, especially if there were several children in the family.

There being no taxes to support the schools, nearly every one in the neighborhood who had children paid something toward their maintenance. If money were not available, as was often the case, the teachers were paid in produce, ranging all the way from coonskins to beeswax as "almost any kind was regarded as legal tender in those pinching days."

The teachers were "generally of an itinerant class of pedagogues, often with little learning," although many of them, it is added, were conscientious and devoted to their task. "A college education," comments a Cass County historian, "was not necessary as a qualification for a teacher in pioneer days. A knowledge of 'readin', 'ritin', and 'rithmetic and in the latter branch of those mysterious arts, to be able to cipher to the double rule of three, was deemed sufficient for all practical purposes. Many of the early teachers did know, however, much more than these rudimentary branches, but did not deem it wise or safe to reveal their more advanced learning. Had a teacher been discovered demonstrating a problem in Euclid, he would have been regarded as a necromancer, and looked upon with grave suspicion." One B. F. Nelson who taught one of Cass County's first schools, was described as "a man of prepossessing appearance, scholarly and gentlemanly in his manners, but entirely without energy and industry." Another specimen was Thomas S. Berry, who came from the state of Virginia to Virginia, Cass County, in 1829, making the trip of 900 miles on horseback and bringing all his belongings in a saddle bag.

Teaching school in those hardy days was a man's job. The school "marm" had not yet taken her important place in rural life. Most of these "masters," as the men teachers were called, were free with their administration of birch and hickory. An early teacher in Pike County was characterized as of the "ox driving class." Another in Schuyler County, instead of having mottoes on the wall, posted the penalties for different offenses in terms of lashes. But not always was strict discipline maintained. Often pupils were permitted to study aloud and the story is told of one teacher with legal aspirations who put in his days reading his law books while the pupils were left to shift for themselves. Full-grown youths, sometimes larger than the teacher, usually attended the schools for a few weeks during the winter. A favorite custom at Christmas time was to "lock out" the teacher until he was prevailed upon to treat the boys to whiskey toddy. A teacher in Woodstock township, Schuyler County, was taken out, wallowed in the snow, and left tied when

he refused to accede to such a demand. On New Year's, so the story goes, he provided two gallons of whiskey without even being asked.

The "pay" schools improved somewhat in later years. As more suitable quarters were provided and standards were increased, they were given the more dignified designation of "subscription" schools. About the same time the academy began to appear.

Rushville serves to illustrate this evolution in schools that took place in the towns of the valley from the time of settlement to the middle of the nineteenth century. Following the era of small subscription schools we find that Rushville had its Western Seminary, Cottage Seminary, Female Academy, one known simply as The Academy, the M. E. High School and the Parrott High School. All thrived for a time but eventually gave way before the system of free schools which in time resulted in the forming of the Union school district.

ACADEMIES OF THE ILLINOIS RIVER VALLEY

The church has often been the harbinger of education. She has realized that by controlling and directing the minds of her young, she can wield a strong influence over the thoughts and actions of her people. Whether her motive was complete domination or merely an honest desire for influential betterment, the Christian Church, Protestant and Catholic, has seldom hesitated to take the initiative in establishing educational facilities. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, the relationship between church and school in America was definite and close.

The church history of the Illinois River Valley is no exception. It was very natural that the early missionaries who came into the valley should be the first to foster its education. The rough pioneer was unfitted to do any constructive teaching. The minister or missionary was often the best educated and best qualified, and had the most leisure time of any man in the community. It was only natural that his influence should be creative. The missionary brought with him the knowledge of the three-fold educational organization of New England: the college, the academy and the common school; and he added to this, wrought out by the circumstances of his environment, the idea of industrial education.

Illinois was settled chiefly during the heyday of the academy. Many of the missionary preachers were academy bred, and naturally they became active in founding new academies in the Illinois Country. The academy had been the outgrowth of an educational revival which reached America in the eighteenth century. There was less of a religious tone to the academy than to the old Latin grammar school which the church had fostered in Colonial days. Religious tests for the teachers were aban-



ILLINOIS SCHOOL FOR BLIND, JACKSONVILLE



ILLINOIS SCHOOL FOR DEAF, JACKSONVILLE

doned and religion ceased to be the foremost subject, but the church generally continued to assume responsibility for the control of the academy.

Conspicuous as the church was in fostering early schools, its influence along education lines was measurably throttled by the state Legislature in the early days of Illinois as a state. Up until 1835, the General Assembly, mostly southern in makeup, refused to grant charters to schools of sectarian control or those which wished to teach theology. This attitude was an expression of the conflict between the Yankee settlers in the upper half of the state and those of Southern origin in the lower. The Southerners were suspicious of a move "to unite church and state, to establish an aristocratic clergy, and to destroy the liberties of the people." Consequently the "Yale Band," composed of New England Presbyterians and Congregationalists, tried in vain for several years to get state charters for Illinois College and Jacksonville Female Academy. Finally, sufficient persuasion was brought to bear that the Legislature granted them in 1835. The same difficulty was experienced by the Baptists with Shurtleff College at Alton and by the Methodists with McKendreean (later McKendree) College at Lebanon. They finally received their charters at the same time and after the same pattern as the Jacksonville institutions, as did Jonesboro College.

Because of the semi-public character of schools of this type, the Legislature carefully guarded the religious freedom of the students, by provisions in the charters. The charter of Hennepin Union Seminary specified that "the said institution shall be open to all denominations of Christians." Granville Academy had a provision that "no particular religious faith shall be required of those who shall become trustees or students."

The chief denominations whose missionaries acted in the dual capacity of teacher and preacher were the Baptists, Catholics, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Methodists. The missionary ministers were often obliged, because of lack of support from their denominations, to establish and maintain schools at their own expense, frequently opening their homes for the purpose. There also were itinerant teachers who came to the West with the avowed intention of transmitting the culture of the East to the crude Middle West. But on the whole, the influence of these early educational institutions was restricted. In spite of the zealous efforts of the missionary and the over-optimistic efforts of the itinerant teacher, it has been said that free government in Illinois would have failed had it been dependent on "the free educational provisions and opportunities for the common man in the early period."

Practically, the ideal expressed in the academy was an ideal of educational advantages for leaders. Academies at first were seldom intended to be public and never became more than semi-public. It is true that in 1806, the Legislature of Indiana Territory (which then included Illinois)

chartered an academy which was the preparatory department for the Vincennes University. The Vincennes Academy was located in Gibson County, in what is now Indiana. The land for the academy was reserved by the Federal government in 1804. The ideal back of the academy was undoubtedly one of democracy, for it was to be supported from the proceeds of the liberal land grants made by the national government. But such an idealistic institution was hardly feasible in the wilderness where Indians roamed and where making a living was difficult. This academy failed.

The early academies emphasized languages and classical subjects and often were excellent preparatory schools for the professions, but they had no place for the great mass of common children. The academy may have aimed toward liberalism, but actually it was highly conservative. The middle and upper classes were the only ones to whom the benefits of an academy education were accessible. To remedy the situation the idea arose of establishing manual labor academies in strategic positions where pupils could earn a part of their expenses, where the common child could have the privilege of going to school, where "habits of industry, morality, and independence" could be taught, and where "a literary education comparable to that given in the usual academy could be obtained." The idea of manual labor education arose in the United States about 1825. There were manual labor schools in Connecticut in 1819; in Maine, in 1821; in Massachusetts in 1824; in New York, in 1827; and in New Jersey, in 1830. The plan was conceived to add to the already existing institutions, manual labor departments. This plan was a complete failure in the more conservative academies of the East, and by 1840 nearly all talk of manual labor departments stopped.

In the West, however, the situation was different. Radical ideas flourish more rapidly upon the frontier, and new ideas are more likely to be adopted. There was an abundance of cheap land in the West and upon this there was ample space to carry on agricultural and mechanical pursuits. J. B. Turner of Illinois College became interested in education for laboring people. Through his efforts, Congress passed the Land Grant Act for the establishment of agricultural and mechanical colleges, and thus Illinois chartered the Industrial University. Many early Illinois academies had provisions in their charters concerning manual labor. The Chatham Manual Labor School provided: "The Board of Trustees shall have entire control of the system of manual labor, and shall determine the proportion of labor of each student, and no student shall be received as a regular member of the school, unless he submits to the performance of such an amount of labor as is enjoined by the trustees, and the trustees shall account to each student, for such labor, which shall be appropriated to discharge his expenses in said school." A realization of the advocacy

of manual labor in the schools came in 1877 with the establishment of manual training in the high schools.

The first academies established after Illinois was admitted to statehood were Belleville, Madison and Washington Academies. They were chartered by the first Assembly in 1819, and it was not long before Belleville and Washington were in operation. These institutions were of a semi-public nature and their trustees were the trustees of the towns in which they were located. Suffrage was actually defined in the academy charters, and those who voted for town trustees automatically elected academy trustees.

One of the first academies of importance in the Illinois River Valley was the Jacksonville Female Academy which was organized in 1830 and chartered in 1835. The organization of the academy was definitely the work of the Rev. John M. Ellis, who was also influential in founding Illinois College. The Rev. Mr. Ellis came to Jacksonville in 1828 as the first pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Jacksonville. His ambition was educational as well as religious advancement, and his influence was real and permanent. Before the academy was opened his wife conducted a boarding school for girls in their home. The first definite proceedings with reference to the academy took place September 29, 1830, when a meeting "of gentlemen favorable to the establishment of a Female Seminary" was held at the home of John P. Wilkinson. A committee consisting of Judge Lockwood, the Reverend Mr. Ellis, and Professor Sturtevant was appointed to report upon the subject at a subsequent meeting. Three days later a resolution was adopted, recommending "that an academy ought to be immediately established in this state to be devoted to female education; and that Jacksonville in Morgan County, is, in our opinion, a highly favorable situation for the successful operation of such an institution."

A board of trustees was named consisting of thirteen members, mostly professional men. No sooner had the trustees been appointed than Dr. Ero Chandler donated land upon which to locate the academy. The charter was granted January, 1835, with the provision that the trustees of the institution "shall hold the property solely for the purpose of female education and not as stock for the individualistic benefit of themselves or any contributor to the endowment of the same, and no particular religious faith shall be required of those who become students or trustees of the institution." The Female Academy at Jacksonville was the first of its kind in the state; and, with the exception of Ohio, the first of its kind in the whole Northwest Territory. The first regular class was graduated in 1844 and consisted of two members. By 1884 the graduating classes had ranged from two to twenty-six and the alumnae consisted of about 400 women.

In the spring of 1836, the same year the village of Granville, in Putnam County was surveyed, ground was broken for an academy there. The movement to establish such a school had been launched the year before by the Reverend Nathan, a Presbyterian minister.

Funds for the erection of the building were raised by popular subscription and men of the community donated their labor. A charter was granted by the Legislature in January, 1837, and Gould and eight others were named as trustees. The academy opened in December, 1837. The first teacher was Otis Fisher, afterwards ordained as a Baptist minister. In its early days, Granville Academy attracted students, not only from near-by communities, but from towns on the Rock and Fox rivers and Chicago. It continued to operate as an academy until 1859, when it became a public school.

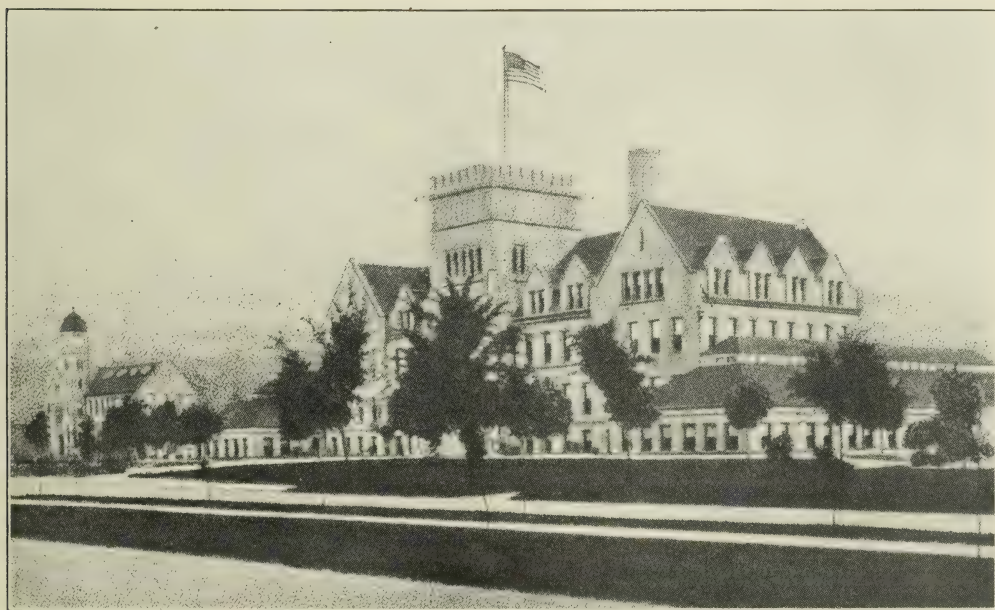
Mount Palatine, also in Putnam County, gave early promise of becoming a center of learning. Eighty acres of land were given by Christopher Winters in 1839 for educational purposes. Upon part of this tract the village of Mount Palatine was laid out, and lots were sold. The unsold property was held by Mr. Winters until a charter was obtained in 1845 for an academy, whereupon the land was transferred to the trustees. A building, costing \$3,000, was erected in 1845-46, and the school, an enterprise of the Baptist denomination, opened in December of the latter year. The Reverend Otis Fisher was the first teacher, as he had been in the Granville Academy. After continuing a few years as an academy, the institution obtained a new charter from the Legislature giving it collegiate privileges, and it became Judson College, of which the Reverend Charles Cross became the first president. Its career as a college lasted only a few years, however. With the construction of the Illinois Central Railroad six miles away the prestige of Mount Palatine as a town waned in favor of its rival, Tonica. The enrollment of the college fell off and financial difficulties ensued. The property had to be sold at a sheriff's sale and passed into control of the Catholics of the town who continued to use it for school purposes.

Walnut Grove Academy in Woodford County was founded in 1848 by the Christian (Disciples of Christ) denomination. Elder Ben Major was the official founder, and John T. Jones the first president. The institution operated seven years as an academy and in 1855 was chartered as Eureka College.

The academies could never be accused of standardization—for, individually, they determined their own methods of procedure. Age and mental attainments varied as entrance requirements, and only an occasional academy specified sex as an exclusive requirement. One might say generally that any one who was able to pay his tuition fees was ad-



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mitted to the academy. The ideal of the academy as stated by many charters was, that if funds were sufficient, tuition was to be free. Unfortunately, in the minds of the trustees, the funds were never sufficient. Sometimes the tuition was fixed by subjects; sometimes on a curricular basis; and sometimes a fixed amount was charged for all work alike. The biggest fees were charged for living expenses. The following are examples of the different types of classification:

In the affluent 'Eighties there came an interesting period of reviving the old-time academy. * * * Perhaps this was a protest against the work offered by the average high school of the day. About 1882, some of the citizens of Toulon again decided to start an academy. They believed that Toulon needed a school that would provide a course of study not offered by the public schools. The institution was opened on October 12, 1882, with J. W. Stephens as principal. The academy continued in operation several years until it was incorporated with the township high school.

A movement was started at Elmwood, Peoria County, in 1885 for means of higher education and to that end the Elmwood Academy was established. Prof. Don Carlos Taft, father of the great American sculptor, and Miss Anna Somers were the pioneer teachers in this institution which gained a wide and enviable reputation. Classes were held in the Congregational Church for ten years, then the academy was submerged into the high school.

The first Princeville Academy in Peoria County had failed during the Civil war, but in 1887 some of its former pupils started another. During the first year, classes were held in the Seventh Day Adventist Church, the next two years in the chapel rooms of the Presbyterian Church and later in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

In 1877, Low Point Academy was built in Woodford County. Prof. J. E. Lamb, who had served two terms as county superintendent, was elected principal, and the attendance looked encouraging. Soon after its erection, however, fire destroyed the building. Inasmuch as there was no insurance, it was not rebuilt.

PUBLIC SCHOOL

Illinois' early magnificent gesture in the direction of a free school system for all white children of the state was quite in harmony with the sweeping assertions of the ordinance of 1787 dedicating the lands of the old Northwest to freedom and education. As early as 1804 an act of Congress had provided for the setting aside of a township of land upon the establishment of government land offices in the territory. Upon entrance to the Union the enabling act dedicated three-fifths of the state's

share from all United States land sales to the encouragement of learning of which one-sixth "shall be bestowed upon a college or university." Also section sixteen in each township was granted to the state for use of schools in each township and thirty-six additional sections were designated by the President for the use of a "seminary of learning vested in the Legislature of said state to be appropriated for the sole use of said seminary." As early as 1824 there was passed by the State Legislature what promised to be a very forward and complete step in the evolution of free schools. Two per cent of all monies coming into the state treasury were to be set aside as an additional educational fund. School districts were given power of levying local taxes for school purposes. Much enthusiasm perhaps has been directed towards this early statute of Illinois which in its declarations antedated many of the older states by nearly a generation. Some of the early historians of the state were prone to ascribe great significance to this act. However, as a matter of fact, noble as it was in its declarations, the results springing therefrom were highly disappointing.

There has been considerable argument over the authorship of the bill but it is significant that all agree that the mover of the bill, Mr. Duncan, later governor of the state, and Edward Coles, then governor of the state, were both sons of the South who had emigrated to the state undoubtedly because of their opposition to the institution of slavery.

It is probable that a few communities organized schools by virtue of the act of 1824, although there is no state record to show that any state funds were enjoyed by such districts and in 1827 that feature of the law allowing localities to tax themselves for schools was repealed and two years later followed the repeal of the provision setting aside two per cent of all state revenue for an educational fund. Townships were allowed, however, upon petition of their inhabitants to sell the school section and use the interest from such funds for the support of schools. However, it is perfectly evident that for the next two or three decades such public funds were also by necessity supplemented by subscription rates assessed by the teacher of a subscription school upon the parents of the pupils. In this connection it is interesting to see the function performed by itinerant or circuit-riding teachers. There is plenty of evidence that this system prevailed throughout the 'Thirties and was looked upon with favor as a means of lessening the cost of education to poor parents.

From 1829 to the passage of the free school law of 1855 the common schools were largely supported by tuition pro-rated upon the parents. This span of years shows little progress towards a free school system.

There is an interesting explanation of this dark era which stands out in sharp contrast with the promise and hopefulness of the sweeping provisions of the Act of 1824. The bulk of population in Illinois lay in the



STATE HOSPITAL, JACKSONVILLE



ILLINOIS WOMEN'S COLLEGE, JACKSONVILLE

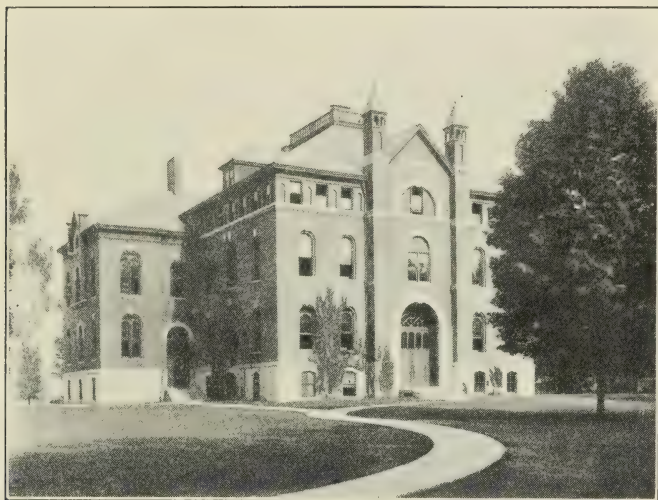
southern third of the state and had been recruited largely from the South. This element shows a very striking divergence between a small group of brilliant, fearless, anti-slavery men typified by Edward Coles, and, on the other hand, the main stock imbued unconsciously with the ideals of the slave South, in which society the training of the youth was naturally associated with the two systems of apprenticeship and indenture leaving little scope in the training of the youth to schools. This element of Illinois population was pretty largely dominant in the affairs of legislation until the northern or New England stream after 1830 began to occupy the central and upper Illinois Valley and the northern belt of counties. The generation between the repeal of the hopeful financial features of the Law of 1824 and the formulation of the Free School Act of 1855 shows little of progress and much of agitation for a reform in public democratic education. Some concessions were made by the Legislature. In 1835 the Legislature authorized a payment of \$200 to an academy in each county offering training to potential teachers. By the same act county commissioners were authorized to pay the tuition in such schools of apprentice teachers who bound themselves to teach twice as long as they were recipients of this free tuition. The '30s and '40s saw much of educational reform movement agitation and argument for improvement. Many of these movements sprang up around pioneer educational institutions. The Illinois Teachers Association seemed to have taken form out of the 1836 commencement held at Jacksonville by Illinois College.

Two years before this the educational reformers had met in Vandalia just prior to the calling of the Legislature in order to formulate their demands for new school legislation. Two such meetings were held the next year at Springfield. Much of the reform agitation was directed towards the establishment of a state superintendent of public instruction. In the fall of '34 more or less simultaneously with the convening of the Legislature, they held a second meeting at Vandalia and there formulated their demands for a system of public taxation to support schools, qualify teachers, some form of supervision of schools and a proper distribution of school funds. Nothing definite was accomplished in the Legislature while two years later that body defeated a bill to make county superintendents elective and also defeated a bill to create a state superintendent of public instruction. Nearly a decade later, in the session of 1845, an educational code of limited significance was established. The Legislature met the demands of the reformers by establishing a state superintendent of public instruction but nullified the same by providing that the secretary of state should be ex-officio holder of the position. Local school commissioners were to be elected popularly. Provision was made for the exclusive use of the English language in the public schools. School

trustees were empowered to buy real estate, but upon the matter of popular taxation a compromise was the best procurable. Each year by two-thirds majority of all legal voters in the school district a tax might be levied not to exceed fifteen cents on the \$100. Not satisfied by the meager results in this educational bill the reform forces persisted and ten years later were rewarded with the first worth-while general school law in the act of 1855. Here there is to be found a genuine state superintendent of public instruction. The bill also compelled local authorities to levy school taxes. The state drew upon the school fund for the support of local schools and in so doing devised a scheme of apportionment more favorable to the old south end of the state than a straight population ratio would have been. One healthy provision was the fact that the share of the locality was determined by the length of the school year.

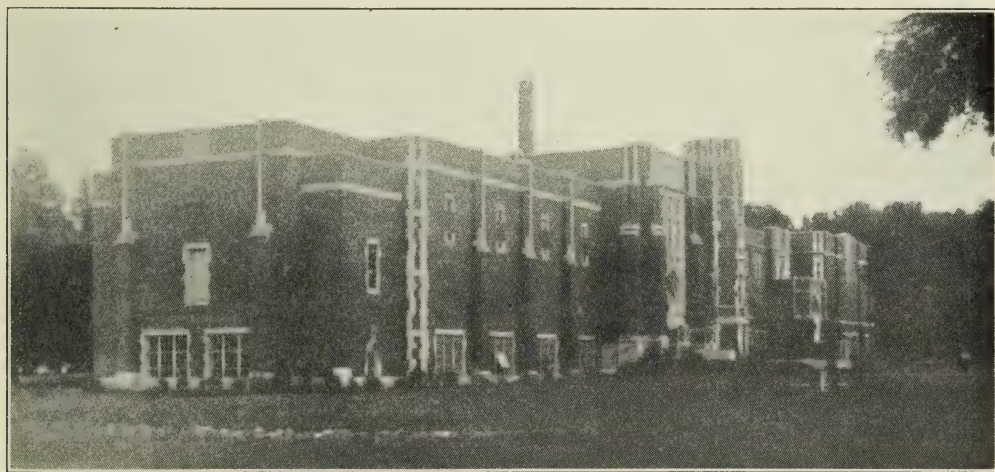
It surprises us today to see that even this comprehensive bill of 1855 after thirty years of agitation still did not contemplate the establishment of free high schools. The evolution of these later institutions seems to have come closely from the institution of union schools. The law of 1855 and its amendments allowed directors of districts to unite and to procure buildings and levy a tax on each uniting district of the union in proportion to the pupils contributed by the same. Again the directors of such uniting districts might elect a new board of three which might levy taxes uniformly on the unit district.

These evolutionary steps were sometimes accompanied by acts little short of revolutionary, as was the case in Rushville when the public school system was complicated by the fact that the city was divided into two districts. In the endeavor to unite districts 8 and 9 and form the present district, passion ran riot and had its culmination in a pitched battle which took place at the seminary on May 11, 1858. It appears that district 9 had purchased the seminary building in 1855 and district 8 had come into possession of the Parrott school building. District 8 had 100 more pupils than 9, while the latter had \$75,000 more taxable property and resisted the effort to form a union. After the two districts were united by a vote of the people, some of the leading citizens of No. 9 met and resolved to gain possession of their property, but the directors of No. 8, getting news of the intention, entered the building at night and nailed down the windows and barred the doors. No. 9 directors decided to take the building by storm and armed themselves with rails to batter down the doors. This led to a general melee and the sheriff was called to establish peace. The matter was taken into court and carried to the Illinois Supreme Court, which held the union valid and assessed the costs against No. 9. Eleven years later the Buena Vista Township District No. 3 was taken in and the present Union District was formed.



PRINCETON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL, PRINCETON

This first township high school in the United States was created by special act of the legislature creating Princeton Township a school district



NEW HIGH SCHOOL, PRINCETON

A former state superintendent says that nearly two-thirds of all the private academies and seminaries have thrown up their organizations and reorganized under the common school law. It was not until 1872 that there was a general high school law. Between '55 and this later date all high schools organized were by special charter of the Legislature. Perhaps the most fruitful idea in the realm of high school organization was contributed by the valley town of Princeton by securing from the Legislature through special charter the prototype of the present township or community high school, which stands as the completed flower of free public school system of Illinois. The Princeton charter provided "that all territory now included within the boundaries of the township of Princeton in the County of Bureau together with such territory as hereafter may be added be and is hereby established as a common high school district."

COLLEGES

The Illinois Valley has seen the development of three characterful colleges: Eureka, Illinois College and Jubilee College. These three institutions typified admirably the diverse traits of early day Illinois life.

Walnut Grove Academy, in Woodford County, was founded in 1848 by the Disciples of Christ, known as Campbellites. Elder Ben Major was its official founder and John T. Jones the first president. The institution existed seven years as an academy and in 1855 was chartered as Eureka College. The Disciples in their annual meeting in 1852 resolved "that we commend to the brethren in Illinois this institution and urge upon them to foster it by sending their sons and daughters there, donating to the library apparatus and raising such means as will enable the trustees to place it upon a sure and permanent basis." They justified their stand by the promise of the institution which purposed "to educate young men for the ministry free of tuition fees." Extracts from the *Eureka College Messenger* describe the early academy thus: "This enterprise that first began to assume form and shape in an humble log cabin standing near the eastern terminus of what is now called Conover Avenue in the year of 1847 under the care of the venerable John T. Jones, that was revived in the small frame house nestled among the underbrush and branches at the roadside near the present cemetery of Eureka in the fall of 1848, has an unwritten history which none but its founders who have stood by through evil report and good report, can even appreciate. Its career has been one of success but not of that flattering kind which the world regards as a grand success." Eureka, passing through many trying years and vicissitudes, has lived an ever increasing life of service to church and to community. It is her proud boast today that she has sent a missionary to the foreign field for every year of her existence.

ILLINOIS COLLEGE AT JACKSONVILLE

The century of glorious accomplishment enjoyed by Illinois College makes the story of her origin read like a fairy tale. The great home missionary preacher, Ellis, was largely instrumental in founding this institution and the selection of "the charming hills" as its site was solely his decision. Losing the much needed support of the Presbytery, then the Presbytery of Missouri, because "it was on the wrong side of the river," he succeeded finally, because of the avidity of the residents in Jacksonville and Morgan County for educational opportunities. The gifts were universal and came from well-to-do and poor, one of whom subscribed "five bushels of wheat," while the largest subscription was only \$400. By a happy coincidence, this sporadic attempt to establish an institution of higher learning attracted the attention of a remarkable group of young men then in the divinity school at Yale College. The history of the so-called Yale Band is familiar to all lovers of western colleges. A strong and growing interest in home missions was making itself manifest at Yale. They, of course, were conscious of the ever increasing stream who were leaving their homes in the East to carve out a new place for themselves in the wilderness of the West. Among these seminary students there existed a "Society of Inquiry Respecting Missions" and one evening late in November, 1828, one of its members, Theron Baldwin, read an essay on "The Encouragement to Active Individual Efforts in the Cause of Christ." An associate of his, Grosvenor by name, had been speculating for some time upon a missionary educational scheme which became the program of this group of divinity students in Yale. Grosvenor, searching for a field of activity, turned to pages of *The Home Missionary*, where he found a report from the Rev. John Millot Ellis from Jacksonville, Morgan County, Illinois, which concluded with these two very pertinent paragraphs:

A SEMINARY OF LEARNING

Is projected, to go into operation next fall. The subscription now stands at between 2 and \$3,000. The site is selected in this county, Morgan, and the selection made with considerable deliberation, by a committee appointed for that purpose; and is one in which the public sentiment perfectly coincides. The half quarter section purchased for the site, is certainly the most beautiful spot I have ever seen. It is about one mile north of the celebrated Diamond Grove, at the east end of Wilson Grove, on an eminence overlooking the town and country for several miles around.

The object of the Seminary is popular, and it is my deliberate opinion that there never was in our country a more promising opportunity for any who desire it, to bestow a few thousand dollars in the cause of education, and of Missions. The posture of things now is such as to show to

all the intelligent people the good effects of your society, and to secure their coöperation in a happy degree in all the great benevolent objects of the day, if such aid can now be afforded in the objects above mentioned.

Immediately the attention of the Band was caught by this definite opportunity of working in the West. After considerable correspondence a plan for united effort between the trustees at Jacksonville and the eastern group was effected. The name of the eastern group was to be the Illinois Association, whose purpose was declared to be the promotion of the "interests of learning and religion by the preaching of the gospel and the establishment of a seminary of learning." The pledge or compact which this group adopted and signed stands almost as a Magna Carta of Illinois College:

Believing in the entire alienation of the natural heart from God, in the necessity of the influences of the Holy Spirit for its renovation, and that these influences are not to be expected without the use of means; deeply impressed also with the destitute condition of the western section of our country, and the urgent claims of its inhabitants upon the benevolent at the East, and in view of the fearful crisis evidently approaching, and which we believe can only be averted by speedy and energetic measures on the part of the friends of religion and literature in the older states, and believing that evangelical religion and education must go hand in hand in order to the successful accomplishment of this desirable object; we the undersigned hereby express our readiness to go to the state of Illinois for the purpose of establishing a seminary of learning as shall be best adapted to the exigencies of that country—a part of us to engage as instructors in the seminary—the others to occupy—as preachers—important stations in the surrounding country—provided the undertaking be deemed practicable, and the location approved by intelligent men—and provided also the Providence of God permit us to engage in it.

Theological Department

Yale College

February 21, 1829.

Theron Baldwin
John F. Brooks
Mason Grosvenor
Elisha Jenney
William Kirby
Julian M. Sturtevant
Asa Turner Jr.

One of the first steps of this eastern group was to secure not only the public endorsement of President Day of Yale University but also that of two members of the theological seminary. They were also successful in getting the endorsement of the American Home Missionary Society, which meant much in a financial way for the future. Meanwhile, in the West, the Presbyterian and Congregational churches of Illinois, operating jointly, had received a Presbytery of their own and this body readily gave its support to the Jacksonville institution. The college opened in January, 1830, under novel conditions vividly described by one of the Yale Band,

Julian Sturtevant, president of the college, in a letter written fourteen years later:

"I repaired to the building and found the floors completed, and the building quite enclosed, but no lathing or plastering, no stove, no teacher's desk and only a part of the seats for pupils completed. But we were pledged to commence instruction at that time. * * * Nine students had presented themselves for instruction. I was accompanied and assisted by Wm. C. Posey, Esq., to whose active efforts to nurse its infancy, the college owes much. Our first business was to put up a stove, which occupied us about two hours, carpenters and teacher, and trustee and students coöperating in the work. Pupils were then called to order. I addressed them a few words and among other things told them * * * what my heart felt and believed, that we had come there that morning to open a fountain for future generations to drink at. We then commended ourselves and the whole great enterprise to God in prayer. It was to me a season never to be forgotten, whatever the fate of the college may be. I then proceeded to inquire into the intellectual condition of my pupils. Not one of them had ever studied English grammar or geography, a few had learned the ground rules of arithmetic and two had some knowledge of the rudiments of Latin."

Illinois College has contributed much, not only to its section in the Middle Valley but to the state and nation by sending her great teachers to wider spheres of influence and through her sons who have made vital contributions to the growing civilization of the West. One early teacher, Jonathan Baldwin Turner, who was sacrificed in the rising feud between the unhappily married twain of Presbyterianism and Congregationalism was to find a wider opportunity of expression in the state. His name became a household word because of his great share in the establishment of land grant colleges.

JUBILEE COLLEGE

The history of Jubilee College is the history of the life of Philander Chase, First Bishop of the Episcopal Church of Illinois. Chase came to Illinois in 1835 when it was truly a frontier state, when the rush of settlement in the North was at its height. He had built Kenyon College while Bishop of Ohio. The difficulties and problems of the frontier were his problems. The acquisition of a domain in the face of speculation and the slowness in offering government land for sale, the work of establishing the church in a rapidly growing state, the hardships of travel in these earlier years, the need of aid in establishing and maintaining education and



JUBILEE COLLEGE, ABOUT 1910

From photograph taken by County Superintendent John A. Hayes, Peoria



BISHOP CHASE'S PROJECTED CAMPUS PLAN FOR JUBILEE COLLEGE
DRAWN ABOUT 1843

religion—these were the problems to be faced if the West were not to be deprived of the ministrations of the Episcopal Church.

Faced with these problems and with the additional one of the indifference in the East to affairs in the West, Chase resorted to his former expedient of founding a school which in the future would supply the needs of the western country. The students of such an institution would be "sons of the soil" familiar with the problems of the frontier and in sympathy with those with whom they came in contact.

Bishop Chase, realizing that little aid could be obtained in this country, was advised by friends to go to England in search of material help for his new project in Illinois. Over ten years before he had gone on a similar mission for Kenyon College and was hoping that many of those friends who had aided him so generously in his first cause would again open their hearts to this new venture. He was quite successful in the venture, both in money subscribed and other gifts necessary and adequate for the rising young college in the woods on Kickapoo Creek. After much negotiating with land companies relative to a site, Bishop Chase decided upon a site some fifteen miles from the present city of Peoria. The site, one on high ground, was thickly wooded and overlooked the valley of the Kickapoo and the rich bottom lands near by promised much in the way of income for the new institution. After picking the site came the long and desperate struggle for funds, to further the cause of which Bishop Chase traveled through the South where he had earlier preached and where churches still owed him back salary. It was the intention of the founder to make Jubilee College partially self-sustaining and in this he was in harmony with the tendency of many of the earlier colleges to place themselves on a manual labor basis. Industries were built at Jubilee which should minister to the needs of the group as well as return, he hoped, a cash income. The plant was described by Bishop Chase in 1841 in the following words:

Crowned with trees overshadowing its professors' houses, its holy chapel, adorned with a bell and beauteous organ speaking forth the Redeemer's praise, its college hall, filled with students, its busy mill, giving forth sawed timber to supply the buildings and to fence the fields, in which are now grazing some half thousand sheep, while other fields pour forth the golden harvest, rise to view. In the centre of the elevated crescent, where cross the public roads, stands the well finished warehouse, filled with goods, sold at profit solely for the benefit of the College; onward farther the farm house and barn, and another professor's house now being built—all these on a domain of more than three thousand acres of the best of land, all the property of Jubilee College, all, all *Paid For*.

The farm was open to cultivation and for a while the prospects of Jubilee College were bright but much depended upon the personal exertions of Bishop Chase, who was now growing old. From the first Chase had great difficulty in securing the type of men necessary to fit into the crude life of this pioneer college. Those best qualified in training could not be induced to give up all the East had to offer and accept the poorly paid positions that Jubilee had. Men with a missionary spirit were needed. However, he did succeed in drawing a few men of great distinction to the institution—one, the Reverend Dr. Niglass, had been at one time a professor in a college in Vienna. In 1851 he was teaching German and Hebrew in Jubilee. Part of his time was spent as a missionary "to preach the gospel and gather the lambs of Christ's fold lately emigrated from his native land." Those of the Episcopalian faith in Illinois were few and the problem of recruiting students for Jubilee College was a difficult one. It would seem that the personality of Bishop Chase was almost solely responsible for drawing students to this institution. Happily his acquaintance was a wide one, covering the lower South and the East and England. Gifts as well as students came in from these widely separated sections.

Seven years after the opening of its doors, Jubilee College celebrated its first commencement. The Reverend McMasters spoke of the event in a letter to Bishop Chase as "an epoch in the history of the American Church," and this it was, rather than an event in the life of the frontier. With Bishop Chase's death in 1852 Jubilee passed its zenith. Largely built by his energy and faith and on his personal following, it did not have innate vitality enough to meet the problems of the future. The Civil war while crippling all Illinois colleges was particularly hard on Jubilee, whose students were more largely recruited from the South. The last days of the college were uncertain and troublesome. Closed through long periods of time, only to be re-opened under different management and to a different end, it finally ceased operations nearly a generation ago and has stood throughout all these years in a beautifully wooded spot above the Kickapoo, little more than ruins and a relic of a great dream. After long litigation between the heirs of Bishop Chase and the Episcopalian Church, it has finally today come to good purpose through the beneficence of a citizen of Peoria, who has given it to the Boy Scouts of Peoria County.

CHAPTER XV

THE EARLY CHURCH

An almost universal lack of religious enthusiasm characterized the general condition of the early frontier. Lawlessness and frontier freedom led to a definite disregard of formality in religion, and often even to an utter aversion and hostility to creeds and doctrines. Religion, to the frontiersman, was emphatically "not the road to worldly respectability nor a possession of it the cloak to immortality." As sectarianism was regarded chiefly as a relic of the East, the early settler frankly had little desire to have its machinery transplanted to the frontier. The underlying spirit of the pioneer relationship to formal religion was well expressed by Birkbeck who wrote almost gleefully in 1817, "But what think you of a community, not only without an established religion, but of whom a large proportion profess no particular religion, and think as little about it, as you know was the case with myself. * * * Children are not baptized, or subjected to any superstitious rites; the parents name them and that is all, and the last act of the drama is as simple as the first. There is no consecrated burial place or funeral service. Marriages are as little concerned with superstitious observances as funerals; but they are observed as occasions of festivity."

The exponents of the various religious sects, however, failed to show a corresponding lack of interest in the frontier. Among some of the Eastern religious enthusiasts there was great interest in "Domestic Missions," and the frontier was regarded as the logical place for religious expansion. Missionaries early visited Illinois, then the extreme frontier of the United States. Among them was Samuel J. Mills, who from 1812 until 1815 conducted two tours through the West and Southwest. Until this time very little was known of the "moral desolation of this rising portion of our country." Mr. Mills desired to "preach the gospel to the destitute—to explore the country and learn its moral and religious state—and to promote the establishment of Bible Societies, and of other religious and charitable institutions."

The official report of the Mills tour included, among other things, an account of the religious condition of the Illinois country. "Kaskaskia is the key to all this country: and must therefore be a place of much importance, although at present it does not greatly flourish. * * * The

people of this place are very anxious to obtain a Presbyterian clergyman. * * * Six miles from Kaskaskia there is an Associate Reformed Congregation of forty families. Besides this we did not learn of a single organized society of any denomination in the county, nor of an individual Baptist or Methodist preacher. The situation of the two upper counties is in this respect somewhat different. Baptist and Methodist preachers are considerably numerous; and a majority of the heads of families as we were informed by Governor Edwards and others, are professors of religion."

It is thus evident that the Methodist and Baptist denominations were the pioneer sects in the Illinois Country. Even as early as 1814, Mr. Mills reported the occasional visits of the Methodist circuit riders in the Ohio, Kentucky and Illinois Country. Indeed Mills' missionary work in Illinois was preceded by the activities of various Methodist laymen. The first of these in the Illinois Country was probably Capt. James Ogle who came in 1785. He was followed in 1799 by Hosea Rigg, the first local preacher to settle in the territory. Official recognition of Illinois by the organized Methodist Church came in 1803 when Rigg went to the meeting of the Western Conference in Kentucky. The Illinois Mission was formed at this session and Benjamin Young was appointed as missionary under the control of the Cumberland District. In 1806 Jesse Walker, one of the strongest leaders of western Methodism, made his first visit to Illinois. The Illinois circuit became part of the Indiana district in 1808, where it remained until 1812, when it was put under the direction of the Tennessee Conference. In 1816 the Illinois district became a part of the Missouri Conference until this was divided in 1824 and the Illinois Conference, embracing the states of Indiana and Illinois came into existence. The membership of the denomination grew considerably and in 1826 the Illinois Methodists were reported to have 4,426 members.

EARLY METHODISM

That Methodism was able to show such a rapid growth is not surprising for its elastic organization was well suited to the changing frontier. In spite of the almost inherently antagonistic attitude of many frontiersmen toward organized religion, Methodism had in it certain characteristics that made an appeal to the West. The circuit system was especially satisfactory for the circuit rider was able to serve whole groups of communities. He was no respecter of time or place; he preached whenever and wherever it was convenient, out in the open air, in a log cabin, in a tavern—it made no difference to him. Methodism was also fortunate in its system of lay or local preachers. Young men who had the ability to speak well in public were given every encouragement and

opportunity to exercise their talent. They were often furnished with "exhorter's" or "local preacher's" licenses by the presiding elder when he came around to hold the "quarterly meeting" conference. The local preacher did not travel the circuit but preached in his own and neighboring vicinities. He was often instrumental in the establishment of new classes, thus anticipating the work of the circuit rider or presiding elder. The fact that these local preachers were generally men of little learning was counterbalanced by their earnestness, enthusiasm, and ability to speak the language of the people. The marvelously effective preaching of many "exhorters" contributed much to the success of Methodism in the West.

In addition to the strong and elastic organization of the Methodists, the denomination was blessed with a doctrine which appealed to the men of the frontier. The spirit of Democracy was rising in the West, and the Methodist doctrine of free grace, free will and individual responsibility exactly fitted in with this. The Methodist theory of man's mastership of his own destiny was in direct contrast to the Presbyterian and Baptist doctrines of predestination and foreordination. "Calvinism, though more congenial to them than Episcopacy, and infinitely more so than Catholicism, was too cold for the fiery hearts of the borderers; they were not stirred to the depths of their natures till other creeds, and above all, Methodism, worked their way into the wilderness." Methodist success owed much to the fact that its tenets were identical with the philosophy of an embryonic Jacksonian Democracy. Equality among all men was the code of the frontier and of the Methodist Church. The Methodist itinerant was usually unfaltering in his denunciation of sin among people of all classes. On one occasion Peter Cartwright was preaching in a local church in Nashville, Tennessee. General Jackson attended one service and Cartwright was made aware of his presence when one of the preachers seated behind him pulled Cartwright's coat and whispered, "General Jackson has come in. General Jackson has come in." Cartwright later wrote in his Autobiography, "I felt a flash of indignation run all over me like an electric shock, and facing about to my congregation, and purposely speaking out audibly, I said, 'Who is General Jackson? If he don't get his soul converted, God will damn him as quick as he would a Guinea negro.'" This typifies certainly the spirit of later Jacksonian Democracy and of many Methodist itinerants.

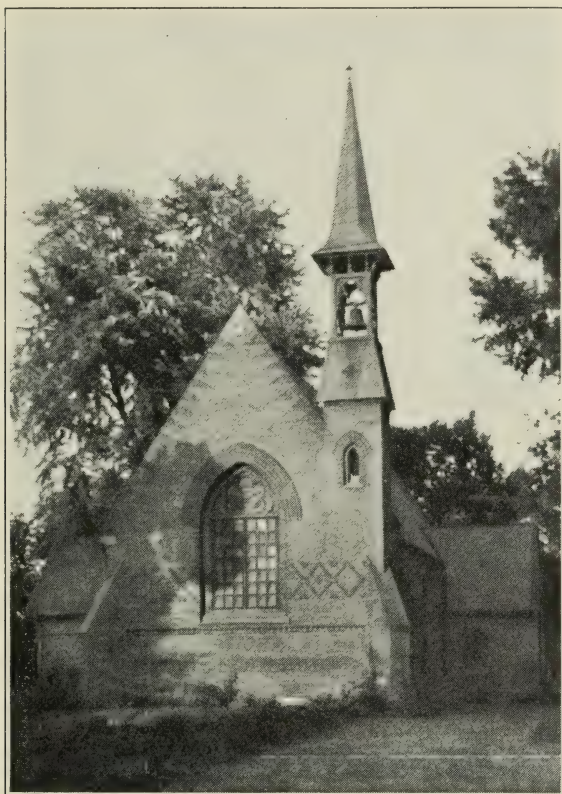
Methodism was also wise enough to utilize the "camp meeting." This institution was not exclusively Methodist, but it was well suited to the denomination's policy and beliefs. In fact the "camp meeting" and Methodism had almost a natural affinity for one another. The "camp meeting" was of vital importance in the spread of religion throughout the West for it afforded a practical method of ministering to great masses. No

room, barn, or meeting-house was large enough for the crowds, and hence the open air auditoriums constructed for the meetings were ideal. At first the camp meetings were held from Friday until Monday, but later when they were found to be practical, longer ones were planned and conducted. Many of the people came in wagons bringing food and bedding for the entire period of the meeting. Some erected wooden tents or shanties which they occupied every year. The entire countryside for miles around attended the Illinois camp meetings and it is probable that the number ran over the thousand mark at many meetings. Social festivities lightened the religious program and were a drawing card for many. The services were often extravagant in their excitement and confusion, yet it cannot be successfully denied that they did great good. The camp meetings appealed to the frontiersman and by capitalizing this appeal Methodism was able to add thousands of converts to the denomination.

In Illinois actual early denominational activity centered around the lives of two preachers: Jesse Walker and Peter Cartwright. In 1807 Walker held the first "camp meeting" ever conducted in the country, about three miles south of Edwardsville. The meeting was so powerful that many present were afflicted with that strange malady or movement known as "the jerks." Walker's activities by 1824 extended into the Illinois River Valley where he founded a class at Peoria. In 1825 he preached the first sermon probably ever heard in Chicago.

Pioneer Methodism owes much to the work of Peter Cartwright. He came into Illinois in 1823 from his field in Kentucky and Tennessee. Paternal solicitude constituted the main reason for his change of residence. Cartwright wished to move into a free state or territory in order to remove his children from the danger of marrying into slave families, to raise his children to work where work was not thought to be a degradation and to procure lands for them as they grew up. His missionary minded instincts led him to want to "carry the Gospel to destitute souls that had, by their removal into some new country been deprived of the means of grace." Cartwright settled near Springfield in Sangamon County and until 1828 covered a circuit as far north as Bloomington. In the fall of that year the Galena charge was added to his district so that his circuit included the Illinois River Valley. The district reached from the mouth of the Ohio River to Galena, the extreme northwest corner of the state, altogether six hundred miles long. Cartwright did a marvelous piece of work in Illinois for he was an indefatigable worker and an effective preacher. He was not cumbered by learning nor checked by timidity; and by use of diatribes and even physical forces, he was able to add hundreds of names to Methodist Church rolls.

Methodism was not without its limitations. Many of the preachers had little education and were weak enough to indulge in sullen distrust



A QUAIN EXAMPLE OF THE EARLY
CHURCHES IN THE ILLINOIS VALLEY:
THE EPISCOPAL HOUSE OF WORSHIP IN
LEWISTOWN

of all who were better schooled than they. They were often prejudiced and burdened with narrow dislikes and morose egotism. Often, though not as often as has sometimes been thought, Methodist camp meetings were characterized by excessive religious frenzy. "The jerks" and fainting spells were not uncommon at Illinois meetings. Peter Cartwright described this most vividly. "A new exercise broke out among us called the jerks, which was overwhelming in its effect upon the bodies and minds of the people. No matter whether they were saints or sinners, they would be taken under the influence of a warm song or sermon, and seized with a convulsive jerking all over, which they could not by any possibility avoid, and the more they resisted the more they jerked. * * * To see those proud young gentlemen and young ladies, dressed in their silks, jewelry, and prunella, from top to toe take the jerks, would often excite my risibilities. The first jerk or so you would see their fine bonnets, caps and combs fly; and so sudden would be the jerking of the head that their long loose hair would crack almost as loud as a wagoner's whip."

But in general the value of Methodism far exceeded its limitations. The frontiersmen did not really need college graduates to minister to them. Sturdy enthusiastic men of their own type served just as well and perhaps even better. It cannot be said generally, however, that all of the preachers were unlearned. Some at least had the rudiments of a good education. The story is told of one William Striling whose vocabulary equaled and perhaps excelled that of any Doctor of Letters. On one occasion, he administered the following reproof to a user of tobacco: "Venerable sir, the deleterious effluvia emanating from your tobacconistic reservoir so overshadows our ocular optics and so obfuscates our sensorium, unless, through your abundant suavity and pre-eminent politeness, you will disembody that illuministic tube from the stimulating and sternutatory ingredient, which replenishes the rotundity of the vastness of its cavity." He improved the proverb, "You can't make a money purse out of a sow's ear" to read "At the present era of the world it has been found impracticable to fabricate a sufficiently convenient pecuniary receptacle from the auricular organ of the genus suo."

Lack of education among the Methodist ministers did not necessarily mean ignorance. They were often trained men in the truest sense of the word. John Strange, a Methodist preacher, described his school most vividly. His Alma Mater, he said, was "Brush College, more ancient, though less pretentious than Yale, Harvard, or Princeton. Here I graduated, and I love her memory still. Her academic groves are the boundless forests and prairies of these western wilds; her Pierian springs are the gushing fountains from the rocks and mountain fastnesses; her Arcadian groves and Orphic songs are the wildwoods, and the birds of every color and song, relieved now and then with the bass hootings of the night

owl and the weird treble of the whippoorwill; her curriculum is the philosophy of nature and the mysteries of redemption; her Library is the word of God, the Discipline, the Hymn Book, supplemented with trees, brooks and stones, all of which are full of wisdom and sermons and speeches; and her parchment of literary honors are the horse and the saddlebags."

Methodist contribution to law and order was a powerful one. The circuit rider stood always for decency and order and was often forced to take a leading part in preserving it. The following account of this situation is more or less typical. A crowd of "rabble and rowdies" armed with "dirks, clubs, knives, and horsewhips" appeared at a Cartwright meeting with the avowed intention of breaking it up. The magistrates were afraid to arrest the gang, so the preachers were forced to interfere. After a general hand to hand fight in which Cartwright took no minor part, the rowdies were put to flight. Over thirty of this group were captured and fines collected amounting to nearly three hundred dollars.

In many of the communities of the frontier morality was extremely loose. "Travellers from the more decorous towns of the East were shocked at the balls, the fighting and the utter disregard paid to the Sabbath day. * * * Pious men were terrified at the drunkenness, the vice, the gambling, the brutal fights, the needless duels they beheld on every hand." Waging an unending war against the forces of unrighteousness, the Methodist Church stood firm and proclaimed an unbending morality. The circuit rider was not often content to deal with sin in the abstract, he often came down to particulars and called out names in meetings, denounced sinners to their faces, and called upon them to repent. The preachers and circuit riders assailed the slave holding system, often to the point of provoking retorts. In striking contrast to the other denominations, there was no hesitation in Methodist denunciation of slavery.

The denomination also went further than did any other denomination in that it actually forbade "drunkenness, buying or selling of spirituous liquors, or drinking them unless in cases of necessity." The Methodist Church was really the original Temperance Society of the West. Practically everyone drank liquor; it was regarded as a household necessity. There could not be a wedding, log rolling, a husking, a quilting, or a funeral without the aid of alcohol. Cartwright testified amply to the prevalence of drinking on the frontier. "From my earliest recollections drinking drams, in family and social circles, was considered harmless and allowable sociality. It was almost universally the custom for preachers, in common with all others, to take drams; and if a man would not have it in his family, his harvest, his house raisings, log-rollings, weddings, and so on, he was considered parsimonious and unsociable; and many,

even professors of Christianity, would not help a man if he did not have spirits and treat the company." Cartwright and James Axley, his co-worker, were emphatically against liquor drinking. Axley preached from the text, "Alexander the Coppersmith did me much evil," and told of Alexander, the reformed still-maker who under the influence of a heavy peach crop yielded to temptation and made stills for the brethren to the destruction of sobriety in the neighborhood. The Methodist circuit riders and preachers in general stood fast in their condemnation of drinking and seemingly did not mind being called "Methodist fanatics." Their influence abated somewhat the widespread use of liquor.

The social contribution was not the least important one of Methodism. The preachers came into intimate contact with the people in their own homes. The talks and prayers before the open fire place, the books brought by the circuit riders into the log cabins, the casual conversations carried on at the table—all of these were sources of inspiration for every member of the family. Opportunity for cultural pursuits on the frontier was meager and there was little demand for books. But the Methodist preachers resolutely forced a few books upon the settlers. They were mostly the publications of the Methodist Book Concern, but they were books on various subjects, such as biography, history, travel, philosophy, and ethics. They also included the old Methodist "stand-bys," the works of Wesley, Fletcher, Clarke, Bangs and Lee.

Thus the Methodist Church exerted a powerful influence for good upon the frontier. With a doctrine and an organization well suited to the West, it early gained prominence and worked almost a miracle upon the moral, religious and cultural life of the early settlers.

BAPTISTS CLOSE SECOND

The Baptists stood as the only close rivals of early Methodism. Indeed organized Protestantism in Illinois began with the advent of Baptists from Kentucky and Tennessee. James Smith, the first Baptist minister, came to Illinois in 1778, and in 1796, with the Rev. David Badgely and the Rev. Joseph Chance, he formed the first Baptist Church at New Design, about four miles south of the present site of Waterloo. It was here in Fountain Creek that James Lemon, one of the later leaders of the Baptist denomination, and his wife were baptized. In 1798 another church of fifteen members was formed near Harrisonville, fifteen miles west of New Design. The next decade saw the formation of three other Baptist churches, at Richland, Woodriver and Silver Creek. The five churches were organized in 1807 into an association called the Illinois Union, and the associational statistics of that year show a total membership of sixty-two and four ordained ministers.

This was the period of the activity of Father Clark, a missionary of rare personality and simplicity of soul. He was a striking exception to the usual uneducated type of frontier itinerant who made occasional visits to the Illinois country. His parish consisted of the whole territory of settlements and to all with whom he came in contact, he was a comforter, counsellor, teacher and friend. Father Clark was originally a Methodist, but he gradually came to the Baptist doctrinal point of view. He entered into an agreement with the Rev. Talbot who had similar views, and they baptized each other and thus became Baptists in a rather irregular way. Father Clark's work was always that of an itinerant missionary, journeying on foot from settlement to settlement in Missouri and Illinois. He received no pay for any of his labors, being content with the simple fare and homespun clothing furnished by the people with whom he worked. It is little wonder that everywhere he was affectionately called "Father Clark." His apostolic ministry stands as an inspiration of worth while living and achievement.

Baptist characteristic individualism proved a source of strength comparable to the elasticity of Methodist organization. Each separate congregation was completely autonomous and this resulted in entire liberty of conscience. But this division proved also a disadvantage for the lack of effective, unified organization hindered rapid and stable growth. The Baptists lacked the centralized organization that makes for successful missionary enterprise. Dissention within Baptist ranks also was a factor in retarding rapid development. Two groups known as the Regulars and the Separates made up the majority of Baptists in Kentucky and also in Illinois. The Regulars were rather strongly Calvinistic and accepted the Philadelphia Confession of Faith as their creed; but the Separates were non-credal and moderate Calvinists. The schism was partially healed when a new dissention broke out, this time over the slavery question.

In Illinois the disagreement over slavery occurred about two years after the formation of the Illinois Union. The dissention is said to have started from an outspoken and probably tactless remark made by James Lemon against correspondence with slave holding Baptists of Kentucky. James Lemon and his sons were staunch opponents of slavery. The elder Lemon founded the first eight Baptist churches in Illinois and insisted before each church was constituted that the members should pledge themselves to oppose the "doctrine and practice of slavery." The slavery split in the church resulted for a time in three associations of which two, the pro-slavery and anti-slavery groups, were members of the original Illinois Union. The anti-slavery Baptists called themselves "Friends of Humanity" and adopted a position similar to the Kentucky faction of anti-slavery believers. James Lemon's part in the controversy was but

an incident in a life of service to Baptist ideals. He and his sons were recognized leaders of prominence both in the Baptist denomination and in the civil affairs of the state.

From 1818 until 1858 the history of the Baptist denomination in Illinois is almost an account of the life of John Mason Peck, pioneer missionary and preacher. Surpassing in versatility of character and activity perhaps even the illustrious and indefatigable Peter Cartwright, John Mason Peck stands as the guiding spirit of denominational and even state history. His story is the story of organized missions, of temperance reform, of anti-slavery inclinations, of immigration encouragement, of educational nourishment, of historical and newspaper writing and of state-wide Baptist enterprise. Peck indeed filled a significant place among the "Church Fathers" of Illinois. He was the one Baptist preacher to leave a deep impression upon the civilization of the state.

John Mason Peck's education was somewhat limited, but he managed to acquire enough schooling to begin his career as a school teacher at the age of eighteen. He soon felt an irresistible call to the ministry and realized the necessity for more education. Luther Rice, a Baptist missionary to India, succeeded in interesting Peck in the needs and possibilities of the Western field. After studying for a few months under the direction of Principal Barnes of Dutchess Academy in Poughkeepsie, New York, he spent a year under the tutelage of Dr. William Stoughton, famous Baptist pastor and trainer of ministers. Although the second Triennial Convention which met in 1817 at Philadelphia was interested primarily in India, it recognized the secondary importance at least of the Western wilderness and commissioned John Mason Peck and James E. Welch as missionaries to the Missouri territory.

Peck's arrival with his family in St. Louis in December of 1817 was anything but auspicious. He was dangerously sick from exposure suffered in the last stages of the journey and for two months he was unable to carry on his missionary activities. Welch and Peck soon started a Western Mission which included an academy, an elementary free school, a Sunday School, a Bible distributing station and a church. The establishment of such a place in the reckless cosmopolitan trading post at St. Louis was certainly an achievement. John Mason Peck's work was not confined to Missouri. He took long trips into Illinois, often coming up into the Illinois River Valley. By taking part of his library with him, he was able to relieve many of the long hours spent in the saddle by study. His labors were partially interrupted in 1820 when support was withdrawn from the Missouri station, and Peck and Welch were asked to join missionaries of other fields. Seeing the possibilities of the Illinois-Missouri field, Peck asked and received permission to remain

there. For two years he labored with no assurance of financial reward. In 1822 the Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Society made him its agent, and in the same year he moved his headquarters to Rock Spring, Illinois.

One of the dreams of John Mason Peck's life was the establishment of a college for the liberal training of teachers, preachers and missionaries. This dream became a reality in 1827 when Rock Spring Seminary in St. Clair County was founded. This came as the result of a campaign Peck launched in the East in 1826 and of Peck's dauntless efforts in the West. He gave part of his farm for the site of the college and acted himself as financial agent, architect, superintendent, contractor and builder. September of 1827 saw three buildings ready for occupancy. The school opened in November with an enrollment of forty boarding students and a faculty of three members; Rev. Joshua Bradley, John Russell and John Mason Peck himself. Courses were offered in Christian theology, mathematics, natural philosophy, classics, English, and history.

Not only was Peck interested in higher education, but he also lent his support to all movements for common schools. Through his travels the outside world came to know about conditions in Illinois and this knowledge led to an increased Eastern interest in missions. The result came to be an enlarged program of denominational activity in the West. Peck's versatility was amazing. He preached, taught school, organized Sunday schools, pleaded the anti-slavery and temperance causes, wrote gazetteers of Illinois, distributed religious literature in the homes of the pioneers, established the first religious newspaper in the Southern section of the country, and wrote numerous histories and biographies. Unlike the proverbial "jack of all trades," John Mason Peck was master of all. Illinois remembers him as a successful author, teacher, preacher, traveller, lecturer, reformer, executive and missionary.

Not all Baptists appreciated the worth of their missionary. Indeed the denomination at that time was engaging in its customary dissention. John Mason Peck believed in missions and in education, but a great many Baptists did not. He and his followers believed in the propagation and organization of missionary societies at home and abroad and in an intelligent and learned ministry. But not all Baptists had these enlightened and liberal views. A large group of the denomination were known as the anti-mission Baptists and made it a point to oppose practically everything in which Peck believed. As much fraternal intercourse existed between these groups as between Jews and Samaritans. Neither seems ever to have read Christ's conversation with the woman of Samaria at the well. Others than Baptists noticed the persistent and sometimes violent attempts of the anti-mission Baptists to break up the work of the mission workers.



PUBLIC LIBRARY, MORRIS



BUSINESS STREET, MORRIS

Peck recognized three grounds of opposition. He said that the anti-mission party believed that only churches and associations which were specifically authorized by the Bible were lawful. In the second place, he asserted that they believed God would work out his own pleasure without man's contrivances, and that all societies for missionary purposes were attempts to take God's work out of his own hands. Finally Peck maintained that the ignorant preachers of the anti-mission party recognized the superior power of the missionary agents and feared that the unlearned leaders would lose their prestige. He said at one time concerning the religious conspiracy in Illinois to put down the missionaries: "The root of all of this opposition is from the preachers. They fear losing their influence, which must be very small indeed." But in reality, if this was the case, the anti-mission party had very little to fear. None of the Baptist preachers were intellectual enough to deserve the title of "highbrow." The only claim the mission party had to such a title was in the insistence of its members that the sermons of the preachers be more than religious ranting and emotional exhortation. An intelligent reading of the Bible was practically the only intellectual requirement of the organization.

PRESBYTERIANS AND CONGREGATIONALISTS

The decade from 1820 to 1830 saw the Methodists and the Baptists practically alone in Illinois. Presbyterianism, embodying in it many of the elements of Congregationalism, was not to experience its period of rapid growth until the early part of the next decade. Other denominations seem scarcely to have known that a frontier existed. The Methodists were in the heyday of their pioneer activities. Fitting in so perfectly in doctrine and in organization with the rising democracy of the West, Methodism indulged in a rapid rise to power. Baptist growth, though not so rapid, was seemingly steady and sure. Although lack of centralized organization and dissention within the ranks of the denomination hindered complete Baptist success, this was counteracted by the zeal of the liberal party under the leadership of John Mason Peck. Baptists can well be proud of their great missionary contribution to the life of the state.

The rise of the Presbyterian and Congregational denominations in Illinois is the most significant religious event of the decade 1830-1840. For some years the two groups worked together under a Plan of Union entered into by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church and the General Association of Connecticut. This provided that the churches themselves should determine whether their polity should be Presbyterian or Congregational; but the practical result was that the entire West came to be looked upon as a field for Presbyterian expansion. Congregation-

alism was believed to be unsuited to Illinois and until 1834 the organization of the churches was almost wholly Presbyterian. It is said that the word "Congregationalism" was rarely used before 1841. Men such as Aratus Kent, Jeremiah Porter and Solomon Giddings, who had been brought up as New England Congregationalists, seemingly felt no hesitation in devoting most of their lives to the cause of Presbyterianism. The missionary activity of the Presbyterians received support from two agencies: the American Home Missionary Society and the General Assembly's Board of Missions. In 1829 the former organization made an effort to unite the two competitive agencies, but several of the Directors disapproved and the matter was dropped. The disagreement as to whether missions should be controlled by a church board or by a missionary society was later one of the causes of the schism between Presbyterianism and Congregationalism.

There was some Presbyterian activity in Illinois before either of the missionary agencies was created. John Evans Finley was probably the first Presbyterian minister to visit Illinois, arriving at Kaskaskia in 1797. The first Presbyterian Church was organized at Sharon in 1816 by the Rev. James McGready. He continued to live in Kentucky, making visits to the pioneer church at regular intervals. There was no resident Presbyterian minister in Illinois at the time the territory became a state. Samuel J. Mills and Daniel Smith made their famous tours throughout the West from 1812 to 1815, and their report stimulated Presbyterian New Englanders to an interest in the frontier. The period of Presbyterian activity did not really begin until the arrival of John Millot Ellis in 1826. The wide vision, sacrificial spirit and extended activity of this man made a deep impression upon later development. To his activity may be attributed the coming of many of the strongest missionaries of the next decade. Like John Mason Peck, Ellis felt the need for educational institutions. At his ordination service in the East, he had been charged to "build up an institution which shall bless the West for all time," and he was never disobedient unto that charge. Through his influence Illinois College was opened at Jacksonville in January of 1830. Before this he had sent a ringing challenge to the East asking for money and men to aid in the educational cause. A group of young men at Yale, who had planned to dedicate their lives to home mission work, made up their minds to accept this challenge. Six of the seven members of this Yale organization decided to make Illinois the field of their work and thus the cause of combined Presbyterianism and Congregationalism was given a great impulse. The first two of this group to go west were J. M. Sturtevant and Theron Baldwin. So great was their enthusiasm that they sacrificed part of their education in order that the new school might be opened that winter. In the fall of 1830

the new institution acquired a president in the person of the Rev. Edward Beecher of Park Street Congregational Church in Boston.

Eventually, however, many of the Congregationalists grew tired of Presbyterian dictatorship. The first Congregational Church actually to be organized in Illinois was started in February, 1833, by Rev. Solomon Hardy, who was supplying the Rev. Asa Turner's church at Quincy. This church was originally called the Guilford Church and is now known as the Mendon Church. Technically the Princeton Congregational Church is older than the Mendon Society, but its organization dates back to Northampton, Massachusetts, where it was organized in March, 1831. Following 1833, a great number of the Presbyterian churches changed to Congregationalism. It is interesting to notice that the first churches to inaugurate this movement did so on the initiative of the laymen. As a rule the ministers were greatly opposed to what seemed a new sect and the Home Missionary Society also opposed such innovation. Some of the preachers, however, were going through the "growing pains" of doubt as to the multiplied sectarian division of the Presbyterian Church. They were becoming increasingly attached to the simple and flexible principles of Congregationalism, but they were not yet ready to denounce their agreement. In 1833, when a Congregational Church was about to be formed at Jacksonville the people called upon Mr. Beecher and Mr. Sturtevant of Illinois College for aid. Both gentlemen refused and the only official countenance received from them was at the last when the expected minister of the church failed to arrive, Mr. Sturtevant was prevailed upon to officiate at the organization. For this even minor encouragement, Sturtevant was sharply rebuked by the Home Missionary Society in New York.

The trial of the Rev. Albert Barnes in 1835, led to division into "Old School" and "New School" Presbyterianism. Almost simultaneously there arose in the General Assembly of Presbyterian Churches an opposition to the financial support of "voluntary societies," such as the Home Missionary Society. The Assembly of 1837 called for the abrogation of the "Plan of Union," the exclusion of four Synods and withdrawal of support from the Home Missionary and Educational Societies. In spite of much protest, this report was carried and the contributions of many Presbyterian churches to the American Home Missionary Society were lost. Fortunately there was but temporary misgiving and ill-feeling. Before long the resources of the society were larger than ever. In no part of the country did greater harmony prevail than in northern Illinois. A town in Morgan County was named "Concord" to indicate the good feeling between Congregationalists and Presbyterians.

The first national convention of the Congregationalists was held in 1846 in Michigan City. The majority of the delegates were from the

Northwest and their feelings were shown in a resolution that "in the judgment of this convention the 'Plan of Union' should be dissolved." This plan was not formally set aside, however, until 1852 when the denomination met in convention at Albany, New York. One of the difficulties which led to the abrogation of the "Plan of Union" was the religious conditions in Illinois. The Presbytery of Alton, including in it the lower Illinois River Valley, carried on vigorous missionary work in Southern Illinois. It was able to contribute from 1856 to 1858 about \$2,500 to the cause and in that same time it received \$7,500 from the Home Missionary Society. But this Presbytery no longer contributed to the treasury of the society and did not wish it to commission the missionaries sent to the district. This case was made public and caused much hard feeling. Division seemed the only sure ground of peace. It is well to note, however, that during the formative years of Illinois history, the Congregationalists and Presbyterians worked together in such a way that it would be impossible now to ascribe the work to either body as a definite source. The annals of the two groups describe the same men and enterprises as Congregational or Presbyterian according to the writers' point of view.

The Congregational missionaries of Illinois were usually men of college or theological seminary training. Their indomitable energy was a guiding factor in their successful adaptation to pioneer life. Much of this energy found an outlet in the establishment of educational institutions. Beloit, Knox and Illinois Colleges; Whipple, Dover and Princeton Academies; Monticello, Jacksonville, Rockford and Galesburg Female seminaries were the result of Congregational labor. Almost without exception the presidents, founders and early professors of Illinois colleges, though nominally Presbyterian, were Congregational ministers. Slavery was one of the pet abhorrences of the Congregationalists. In 1844 they made a rule to which they required their members to subscribe. "No one shall be admitted to membership in this body who does not regard slaveholding as a sin condemned by God." It is possible that this point was one of the differences of opinion in many of the Presbyterian-Congregational churches. Thus indirectly, it may have been one of the reasons for formal severing of connections. Equally emphatic were the Congregationalists in their advocacy of temperance reform. In general the Congregationalists were liberal, products perhaps of a mellow Jacksonian Democracy.

Even after Presbyterianism had been purged of the Congregational element, it remained divided into the "Old" and "New" schools of thought. These two schools represented the inherently antagonistic liberal and conservative attitudes of man. It was due to the influence of the "Old School" in 1837 that the Plan of Union of 1801 was abrogated. Cor-

responding in animosity of feeling to the mission and anti-mission parties of the Baptist denomination, the "Old" and "New" schools of Presbyterianism waged unending warfare. The "Old School" forces were diligent in their denunciation of "New Haven" theology which was not regarded as severe enough in its phrasing of the doctrine of Predestination. The determination of the "Old School" to drive the new school element out of the church may perhaps be understood if not justified on the grounds that the essence of Presbyterianism is discipline. Without this element Presbyterianism would lose its savor.

In Illinois, the new school forces had nourished the denomination. Free schools, free press and speech, free labor and anti-slavery views made up the tenets of new school beliefs. The synod of Illinois in 1836 denounced ministers who bought or sold slaves or approved such actions and they refused to condemn the doctrine of the abolitionist while declaring that immediate emancipation was inexpedient. The Alton Presbytery went so far as to appoint a committee to draft a memorial to the synod against receiving into communion persons from the South who had sold their slaves instead of freeing them. The dominance of the old school forces began to be felt in 1837. The newspapers took up the war when the *Alton Observer* denied that all sinned and fell in Adam. The remark of an Illinois College Professor, "What New Haven is in Connecticut I would make Jacksonville in Illinois" created much excitement. The general assembly of the church asked the Synod to purge itself of errors and the result was that all of the delegates from the Kaskaskia Presbytery, four from Sangamon, twelve from Schuyler and one from Peoria seceded from the synod of 1838. The remaining group declared boldly that the general assembly had been wrong and that it was the duty of the ministers to preach against slavery. A loose organization of the new school forces was suggested which would continue to coöperate with New England Associations and with the Congregationalists.

It is rather difficult to see all of the distinctions between the forces of Congregationalism and "New School" and "Old School" Presbyterianism on the frontier. Generally speaking, the Congregationalists and "New School" Presbyterians were liberal, representing social and economic reform in the way of free schools, labor, speech and press. The "Old School" Presbyterians were conservative, opposing the liberal views of the "New School." Both were but expressions of the liberal and conservative tendencies of the nation.

OTHER DENOMINATIONS

Other early denominations in the Illinois River Valley may most distinctly be classed as minor denominations. John Mason Peck in his "Gazateer" of 1834 summarized the religious situation of the state as

follows. The comparative strength of the various denominations may be easily seen in this chart.

Methodist Episcopal: 5 districts, 56 circuit preachers, about twice that number of local preachers, 13,421 members of classes.

There is preaching in every county.

Baptists: 19 associations, 195 associated and 5 unassociated churches, 146 preachers, 5,635 communicants.

Presbyterians: 1 synod, 5 presbyteries, 50 churches, 34 preachers.

Congregationalists: 3 or 4 churches.

Cumberland Presbyterians: 2 or 3 presbyteries, 12 or 15 preachers, several hundred members.

Methodist Protestants: 3 circuit and several local preachers. This sect is fast increasing.

Campbellites or Reformers: Several large and several smaller societies.

Seceders: several societies.

Covenanters: several societies in Randolph, Perry and Jefferson counties.

United Brethren: one society in McLean County.

Dunkards: 5 or 6 societies and the same number of preachers.

Lutherans: 2 or 3 congregations and the same number of preachers.

Mormons: small society in Greene County.

Quakers: small societies in Tazewell and Crawford counties.

Catholics: very small number.

It is thus evident that the Methodists and the Baptists were making rapid gains in membership. In 1830 the Methodists boasted a membership of about six thousand communicants. By 1835 this was increased to fifteen thousand and that number was doubled by 1840. Comparatively speaking, the growth of Methodism was not so great from 1840 to 1848 but it was still sufficient to insure the denomination first place in numerical strength.

Baptist growth was also rapid. Between 1830 and 1840 the membership increased from 3,600 to 12,000 and by 1850 it numbered twenty-two thousand communicants. Characteristic strife marked the history of the denomination during this period for the mission and anti-mission parties continued their historic feud. In general, however, the majority of the denomination followed John Mason Peck. The year 1836 saw the formation of the Illinois Baptist Education Society designed to aid candidates for the ministry. The travelling missionaries were expected to help in the work of building up churches. Between April, 1836, and January, 1837, Moses Lemon visited fourteen churches representing a distance of 2,100 miles travelled, and gave one hundred and five religious discourses. In about the same amount of time his brother James travelled 1,595 miles and preached ninety-six sermons. Peck was at the zenith

of his power. He was appointed general agent to visit the churches and to act as publicity agent for Shurtleff College and other societies. The slavery crisis of 1845 resulted finally in the establishment of a new Baptist central body, the Baptist General Association of Illinois. This body was inclined in the anti-slavery direction.

One of the most interesting of the denominations was the group known as the Disciples, Christians or Campbellites. This sect developed strength about the year 1835. It was not a formal denomination but consisted of a group of laymen whose common insistence was upon immersion, upon the Bible as their rule of faith, and upon evangelistic meetings. The creedless individualism of the "Campbellite" sect inevitably made its appeal to the West. Its freedom and simplicity of belief was too inherently western not to impress frontiersmen. The seat of Campbellite activity was particularly around Bloomington, Springfield and Jacksonville. By 1840 the group had sixty churches, twenty-seven ministers and four thousand members. By 1850 they more than doubled their strength, having one hundred and twenty-five churches, sixty ministers, and ten thousand communicants.

The group of Disciples or Christians were frowned upon by most of the established denominations as heretical and unorthodox. The term "Campbellite" was a term of derision. The members themselves contended for the simple name "Christian" and said that they were "Christians only" and not the "only Christians." The attitude of the other denominations toward the new sect can be seen from an extract of Julian M. Sturtevant's autobiography:

"From a very early period in the history of Jacksonville the people known as 'Disciples,' the followers of Alexander Campbell of Bethany, Va., were very active. They were regarded with much distrust by other denominations, and in fact were hardly considered an evangelical body."

The local influence of the few Illinois Covenanter churches is undoubted. In 1818 the Covenanters presented a petition to the convention asking that an article be inserted in the constitution recognizing Jehovah to be the God and the Bible as the revelation of His Will to man. It was reported that these Covenanters "refused thereafter to perform the duties of citizens except in the payment of taxes, as voters, militiamen or jurors."

John Mason Peck reports a few representatives of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Their greatest activity seems to have been in the vicinity of Edwardsville. Revival methods of this sect were extremely emotional, comparable to Methodist camp meetings. Their appeal was mostly to the more ignorant classes. Unitarian and Universalist propaganda began to creep into the frontier from the East, but before 1835 there was no definite missionary activity among either of these sects.

Episcopalian activity in Illinois was limited. Three churches were

organized in 1834 and in 1835 the first annual convention of this denomination was held, seven ministers being present. Twenty-five clergymen in twenty-eight parishes and over five hundred members was the accomplishment by 1845. By 1848 the number of members had grown to over a thousand. The great missionary bishop, Philander Chase, is the main figure in Illinois Episcopalian history. He was well known for his founding of Jubilee College, near Peoria. In attempting to be discreet upon the subject of slavery, he was drawn into many wordy wars with the abolitionists.

Until 1830 the activity of the Catholics was confined mostly to a few scattered congregations in southern Illinois. The tide of Catholic immigration of the 'Forties shifts northward. In 1835 over four hundred Catholics resided in Chicago and the number was thickening throughout the state. In the central part of the state in 1832, Father Van Quickenborne was ministering to Springfield and other localities in Sangamon County. In 1834 the state was divided longitudinally so that the western half was attached to the see of St. Louis, while the eastern half, including Chicago, became a part of the see of Vincennes. The Catholic population continued to grow so that in 1843, the diocese of Chicago, consolidating all of Illinois, was established by Pope Gregory XVI.

German and Scandinavian immigration of the 'Forties resulted in the entrance of many Lutherans into the state. By 1846 they reported seven ministers, fifteen congregations and six hundred and eighty-five communicants.

REVIVALS AND CAMP MEETINGS

The early churches in Illinois differed greatly as to doctrine and organization, yet they were all commonly interested in the propagation of the Christian faith. It is interesting to note that most of the denominations used practically the same methods of bringing this about. The revival was a common means. Camp meetings were known to denominations other than the Methodists. The fact that the revivals or camp meetings were common to all led to the quite frequent coöperation of two or three denominations. The Jacksonville Revival of 1834 is an illustration of this. The "Home Missionary" gave a graphic account of the proceedings: "Christians of different names sat together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and with one heart, and one mind, wept, and prayed, and labored for the salvation of sinners. This was true to such a remarkable extent as to attract the attention and excite the fears of some who are rarely found within the walls of a church; and who are perpetually haunted by that bugbear, *Union of Church and State*. They thought that we had fallen upon new times; this union of different denominations,

they could not understand; there must be some deep-laid plot, and they inquired around with no little solicitude, *What it meant*. Their fears were allayed, however, when told that it was simply the result of good feeling on the part of Christians. In fact, they confessed that this was just what they thought ought always to be. What a lesson! A real union on the part of Christians of different denominations to save souls, so rare a thing in the nineteenth century as to awaken in this way the fears of the enemies of religion."

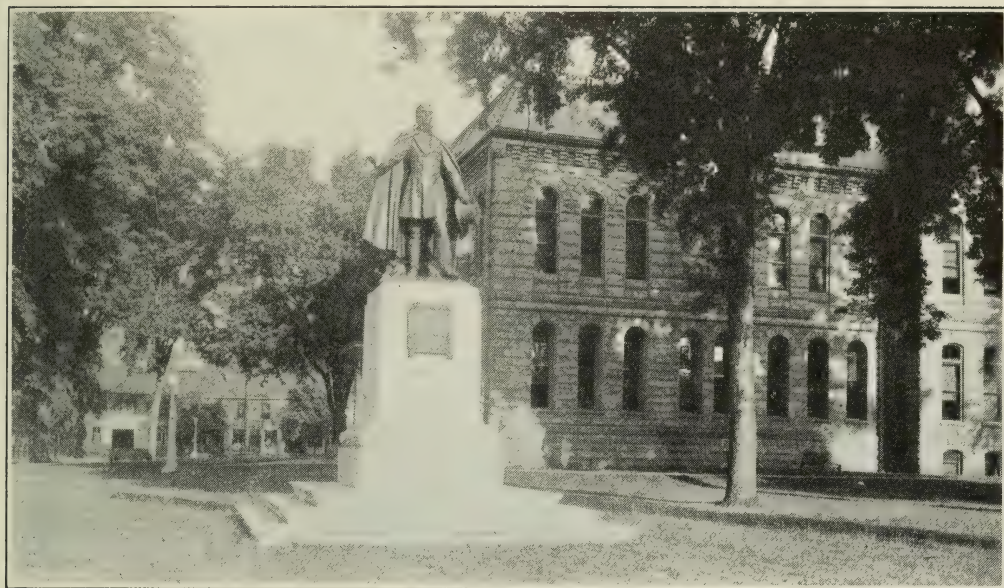
The Sunday School served as another object of common interest. Inasmuch as Sunday Schools were erected in places where missionaries visited only now and then, they seemed to keep up a none too stable religious interest. The Sunday Schools were handicapped by the opposition of the anti-mission party and lack of competent teachers. The latter difficulty was sometimes overcome when two or three denominations united in a single school. Agents of the American Sunday School Union were actively occupied in the western country, coöperating with all interested denominations. The fact that the Sunday School Union was an interdenominational affair made such men as Finney and Cartwright hold aloof from the movement. They believed that it was designed by the Easterners to civilize the West and they felt a natural jealousy. The state was slow in providing needed schools and the Sunday School often stood as a substitute, offering training in intelligent citizenship.

Bible and Tract Societies were also partially interdenominational in character. Pamphlet literature and Bibles were distributed in large numbers by missionaries of every denomination. Peter Cartwright amply testified as to their value: "It has often been a question that I shall never be able to answer on earth, whether I have done the most good by preaching or distributing religious books." The liberal elements of all denominations also found a common interest in their attempts to secure training for their ministers, and in their intense belief in missionary enterprise.

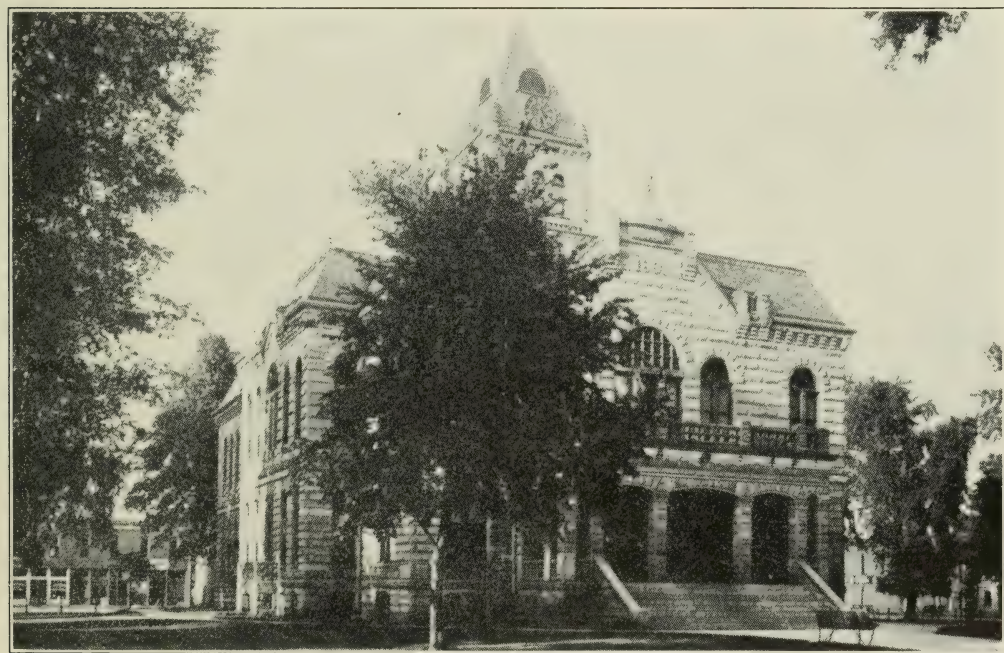
The early churches came to be very active in the temperance cause. In 1830 a missionary was able to report what would have been unheard of in 1820: "A barn was put up today, at the house where I am now writing, without the aid of ardent spirits; and there is not only an expression of general satisfaction, but many seem to be highly gratified in witnessing the fact." In general, the early churches frowned on slavery. In some instances the missionaries were tactful enough rather to straddle the issue, but in almost no case was slavery treated as a desirable institution. The Pioneer of Methodism, Peter Cartwright, was twice elected to the state legislature on an anti-slavery platform.

The Illinois River Valley contained typical Illinois religious institutions. The early churches there contributed much in moral, cultural and

social value to the life of the state. No more was the frontier characterized by freedom from all restraint. No longer was it true that the West was a community without an established religion and where a large proportion of the people professed no particular religion. "Wherever there were churches, or preaching stations, in those times, the moral conduct of the people was sensibly improved, showing clearly that the religion of the early settlers was something better than mere fanaticism."



CARLIN MONUMENT, CARROLLTON



GREENE COUNTY COURTHOUSE, CARROLLTON

CHAPTER XVI

THE NEWSPAPER PRESS

They were called newspapers, but in the strict sense of a later and more efficient era, the first journalistic enterprises of the Illinois Valley—in common with those of all other sections of the state—fell short of the mark. To give the pioneer settler something to read was their ostensible mission, but politics was the real moving force behind them. What smattering of actual news they carried was indeed but incidental to the main text. Their columns were given over chiefly to political discussion, supplemented by the “elegant miscellany” which, produced by aid of shears and paste-pot, was the boon of the pioneer editor, just as “boiler plate” and patent insides were to become the salvation of the rural press in later years.

It was not until 1830 that immigration had shifted sufficiently to the valley of the Illinois to warrant a newspaper undertaking within this area. Journalistic development had been none too rapid in Illinois, due no doubt to the scattered status of the population. Papers had been established some years earlier in the neighboring territories of Indiana and Missouri. Prior to admission to statehood in 1818, but one paper was published within the bounds of Illinois. That was the *Illinois Herald*, established at Kaskaskia in 1814, and no other was attempted until four years later. By the end of the decade which culminated in the convention campaign of 1823-24, with its consequent controversy over slavery, the number had been increased to only five.

Something of the interest in public affairs which motivated these “original five” of Illinois journalism is told by Governor Ford in his “History of Illinois.” “The anti-convention party,” he relates, * * * “established newspapers to oppose the convention; one at Shawneetown, edited by Henry Eddy; one at Edwardsville, edited by Hooper Warren, with Governor Coles, Thomas Lippincott, George Churchill, and Judge Lockwood, for its principal contributors; and finally, one at Vandalia, edited by David Blackwell, the secretary of state. The slave party had established a newspaper at Kaskaskia, under the direction of Mr. Kane and Chief Justice Reynolds; and one at Edwardsville edited by Judge Smith; and both parties prepared to appeal to the interests, the passions,

and the intelligence of the people. The contest was mixed up with much personal abuse; and now was poured forth a perfect lava of detraction, which, if it were not for the knowledge of the people that such matters are generally false or greatly exaggerated, would have overwhelmed and consumed all men's reputations. * * * The whole people, for the space of eighteen months, did scarcely anything but read newspapers, handbills, and pamphlets, quarrel, argue, and wrangle with each other."

That Illinois journalism should thus have had its very inception in political controversy seems logical enough, for politics constituted an important factor in the lives of the settlers. Viewed from the perspective of a century, pioneer life appears as glamorous romance; a living story-book tale. Closer inspection, however, leads to a soberer conception that, once the novelty of the new country had lost its edge, constitutions hardened to the inconveniences of privation, minds attuned to the thrills of adventure, and visions whose goal was to establish new homes rather than to build a new empire, must have found in even so active a life, lapses of dull monotony. Forms of recreation were restricted. "House-raising" became festive community affairs. The utmost was made of weddings. Religious gatherings had their social aspect. And so, too, we find men turning their minds to politics for diversion as much as for the satisfaction of civic pride.

Most of the early papers were strongly partisan, staunchly upholding the policies of one party or faction, and vigorously deriding those of another. Some started out to be neutral in politics, and some succeeded in maintaining a degree of independence, but few succeeded in avoiding active participation in the controversial issues of the day.

Wrought by controversy though they were, sometimes to the point of bitterness and personal invective, a greater part of the papers were highly moral in tone and often religious. "Devoted to the interests of politics, education and religion," was the self-styled policy of the first journalistic venture of the Illinois Valley, the *Western Observer*, started at Jacksonville in 1830. The editor of the *Spirit of the West* at Naples in 1837 went even further. He adopted this as his motto: "Amidst the hum, the strife, the shock of men; we hear, we see, and then express." Then he promised to devote the columns of his paper to "Education, Morality, Political Economy, and General Miscellany."

The space that was not taken up by political news, editorial comment, and advertising, was largely filled by home-talent contributions, usually literary efforts or opinions on current affairs, and reprints of articles from eastern publications. Sometimes the editor was an itinerant politician, and when he found it necessary to be away, the supplying of the copy was left entirely to his printer. Quite as often the editor was his

own printer, and had to depend largely upon contributors and clippings to fill his paper. The dependence placed upon these sources of material was admitted by James Hall, one of the earliest editors of the state, in the *Illinois Gazette* at Shawneetown in 1820. "Our own resources at this isolated spot," he apologized, "where we can calculate on but little assistance and where we seldom receive new books, must of course be small; but the columns of many of the eastern papers are tastefully variegated with those lighter productions which delight the fancy, and on them we may draw, for the amusement of our readers. But among our friends and neighbors there are, no doubt, many who might contribute something towards the amusement and instruction of others."

Lack of communication processes made it impossible to give a timely account of news from a distance, and what was printed of events of the outside world was of necessity several weeks late. The *Illinois Patriot* at Jacksonville made this lament in its editorial columns of Thursday, February 23, 1832: "The mail, which was due Tuesday, arrived yesterday, bringing us no news east of Springfield. We learn by the Springfield papers that a gentleman who arrived at that place from St. Louis, informed the editors that the nomination of Mr. Van Buren had been rejected. We await with great anxiety for some official news which will confirm this statement."

From the foregoing will be noted the preference and precedence attached to political news. Little or no attention was usually given to happenings at home. Many copies of early papers are found without a line of what, in the terms of modern journalism, is classified as local news. Sometimes mention would be made of so obvious an occurrence as a notorious murder, or a flood, or a storm; but even then the information carried would be but fragmentary. There were no columns of "personals" which later were to become so indispensable a feature of the rural press.

Files of old newspapers, carefully stored in fireproof vaults, are treasured as source material in historical research; yet how much more valuable they would be now if their publishers had displayed some of the avid enterprise for "complete coverage" which characterizes their successors of later years. Most of the knowledge which we gain of contemporary life from the early papers of the Illinois Valley must be culled indirectly from the editorial comment upon the times and from public notices and other forms of advertisements. Newspapers then were not the current histories they are today. The traditional "nose for news" had not developed its acuteness, and importance which the passing years have placed upon affairs in the development of a new country was not then easily perceived. Indeed, distance seems to have been regarded as an actual

enhancement of the value of news. During the "cold summer" which prevailed over America in 1816, the *Illinois Herald* at Kaskaskia told in detail of the weather conditions in New York state but left no record of the presence of low temperatures and their effects in Illinois.

Perhaps not all editors shared the utter disdain which Jonathan Baldwin Turner displayed toward news, but his attitude serves as a graphic case in point. Turner was an educator of high intellectual attainment at Jacksonville, who tried his hand at journalism in 1843 as editor of the *Illinois Statesman*. On the grounds that "speculation, office seeking, demagogues and party spirit have conspired to plunge us into the gulph," he set forth as a militant independent with the aim in view, through his paper, "candidly and earnestly to enquire for the true causes and remedies of present ills, and to seek some sure foundation for future action and future hope." He applied himself to his task with a pen which, if it was eloquent, was equally exhaustive. When the *Quincy Whig* made playful reference to one of his editorials as being thirteen columns long, Editor Turner promptly replied that his Quincy contemporary was wrong; that the actual length of his editorial was only eleven columns. But for the irksome task of informing his readers what was going on in the community or the world at large, he had neither space nor inclination, and, under the heading of "Crimes and Casualties," he expressed himself on the subject in the following manner: "Our paper is small, and if our readers will for the present have the goodness to imagine a certain due proportion of fires, tornadoes, murders, thefts, robberies and bully fights, from week to week, it will do just as well, for we can assure them they actually take place."

In contemplating this absence of news sense, it is to be considered that, except perhaps in the metropolitan centers of the East, journalism in those days had attained no standard pattern as we know it today, and that being the editor of a paper was more of a side-job than a profession in itself. Most of our early editors were politicians or lawyers, sometimes school-teachers or preachers, and not infrequently the responsibilities of editorship were assumed by the publisher-printer whose time was kept pretty well occupied by the mechanical problems of publication.

Putting out a paper in pioneer days, at best, was neither an easy nor a gratifying task. Means of communication were primitive and inadequate, and delivery by mail was slow and irregular. Transportation of printing supplies was even more unreliable. Paper and ink had to be shipped by boat, usually from cities on the Ohio River. Publishers in towns on waterways had an advantage; those at inland points had the added delay and expense of bringing their goods overland from the boats

by wagon. High water at one season or low water at another frequently interrupted navigation on the rivers. The poor condition of roads always made transportation by wagon subject to delay. Failure in arrival of supplies, shipped months before, often caused papers temporarily to suspend publication. The editor of the *Illinois State Gazette and Jacksonville News* on January 17, 1835, sought to placate his subscribers as follows: "We feel no inconsiderable regret at being compelled to an occasional suspension of our publication (due to a want of paper); but the regret is lessened somewhat by the fact that every paper in the state, with perhaps a single exception, has suffered like disappointments." The *News* at that time had not been able to publish an issue for three weeks.

From a standpoint of pecuniary profit, publishing a newspaper was a poor business. True, no great initial investment was necessary. The pioneer printing office was a simple affair. Mechanically, the two principal requisites were a press and some type; almost any sort of a building would suffice for an office. Depending upon the quantity of type deemed necessary, the cost of equipping such plants is variously recorded as from \$400 to \$1,000. Nor was the cost of maintenance great. Often one man, if sufficiently versatile, was able to run the whole business; seldom were more than two or three employed. But if the costs of operation were light, so were the returns. Advertisements were few and small, scarcely ever sufficient to fill one-fourth of the space of a four-page paper; and the rates were low. The circulation, upon which devolved the principal burden of producing revenue, was restricted by sparsity of population and inefficiency of delivery to a few hundred. Moreover, it was easier to get a man to subscribe for the paper than to get him to pay. As an inducement for prompt payment, the subscription price was increased if not paid in advance. The *Illinois Patriot* at Jacksonville charged \$2.50 a year if paid in advance, \$3 if not paid in six months, and \$3.50 if not paid within a year. Such sums loomed large as consideration for such a luxury as a newspaper, and collections were often difficult. In lieu of money, commodities of almost any sort would be accepted, and usually not ungratefully, by the editor; and the list of goods taken in exchange for subscriptions included not only farm products and foodstuffs, but such articles as clean linen and cotton rags, fire wood, tallow, beeswax, feathers and hides.

In consequence of all these vicissitudes, newspapers had a struggle to subsist. Usually a paper would be nurtured along by one owner for a year or two, then either suspend or change hands. The early history of the press of the Illinois Valley is largely a succession of changes in ownership and management, with changes in names almost as numerous, making the lineage of most of the papers as complicated as the abstract of title to a piece of land dating back to the French occupancy.

FROM 1830 TO 1840

It is the purpose of this study to give somewhat in detail an account of the newspapers established in the Illinois Valley during the decade which began in 1830 with the launching of the *Western Observer* at Jacksonville. After 1840, ventures became so numerous that only a general outline will be attempted of the development from that time on.

Jacksonville was a town of less than 1,000 in population when James G. Edwards issued the first copy of the *Western Observer* in May, 1830. Edwards came to Jacksonville well equipped for his undertaking. In New York, he had been a practical printer, proof-reader, reporter and editorial writer. His friend, Horace Greeley, was a poor youth, practically unknown, when Edwards, having failed in an attempt to start a Sunday newspaper in New York, decided to take the advice which later was to become forever associated with Greeley's name, and came west. Just turned 30, he was a youth of intelligence and high ideals, and he set forth to devote his paper to "social reform and freedom, and a strong advocacy of temperance." From what records are available, it appears that the *Western Observer* led a more or less hectic existence for about a year and was dropped. In 1831, however, Edwards joined with Charles Jones in the publication of a new paper called the *Illinois Patriot*. The following year, Jones withdrew from the partnership and headed a company that started the *Jacksonville Banner and Morgan County Advertiser*, which was, however, but short-lived. Edwards continued to run the *Patriot* with but meager financial success for about six years. Then he sensed a better opportunity farther west and went to southeastern Iowa. Again using the name *Patriot*, he started a paper (in 1838) at Fort Madison, which he moved a few months later to Burlington and eventually renamed the *Hawk-Eye*. The Burlington *Hawk-Eye* remains to this day a memorial to Edwards' vision and proudly traces its history to his first small paper at Jacksonville. The name of the *Illinois Patriot* was changed to the *Illinoisan* when Josiah M. Lucas became its owner in 1837 or 1838. Some records indicate that Governor Duncan was in control of the paper for a brief interval between the regimes of Edwards and Lucas. It was discontinued in 1844, after Lucas was elected recorder of Morgan County. Later in life, he became United States consul at Turnstall, England.

The *Illinoisan* advocated the Whig cause, as the *Patriot* had done before it. The Democratic party became represented at Jacksonville by the *State Gazette and Jacksonville News*, which was the result of a merger in 1835 of two papers which had been started during the preceding year. This combination underwent several shifts in organization and survived only a few years. However, the *Illinois Standard* may be re-

garded as a continuation of it, since S. S. Brooks, who had been affiliated with the *Gazette and News*, was publisher of the *Standard*, started in 1838. Brooks bought out the *Spirit of the West* at Naples and combined its title with that of his own paper. The *Spirit of the West and Illinois Standard*, however, was continued only to the close of 1839, to be resumed the following spring by a new management as the *Illinois Democrat*.

Two more papers were launched at Jacksonville during the '30s. *Liberty's Sentinel* was a political organ started in 1835 "to support the Federal Party," but, from all accounts, it had but a brief existence. The other was the *Common School Advocate*, which made its appearance in 1837 and was the first publication devoted exclusively to the cause of education in the "great far west." The venture, sponsored by Calvin and Ensley T. Goudy, was a courageous one, but was doomed from the start. There was no school system in the state and no standard of qualifications required of teachers. Moreover, a large portion of the citizenry was antagonistic toward a public educational system because of the burden of taxation it held in prospect. A few "literary gentlemen" donated their services as contributors for one year out of their interest in the cause, and the editorship is attributed, though with some question, to the Rev. Theron Baldwin. However, at the end of the year, the *Common School Advocate* went the way of three other educational journals which had been attempted in the United States and failed.

From the foregoing, it will be seen that Jacksonville literally seethed with journalistic activity in the '30s and had papers under eleven different names in ten years. Most of them, however, harassed by adversities, were but of a transitory nature, and not until the *Journal* got under way in 1845 did the press of Jacksonville assume a status of permanency.

With classic Jacksonville as the starting point for journalism in the valley, the movement shifted northward. The first paper between Jacksonville on the south and Chicago on the north was established at Beardstown on June 18, 1833. It bore the ponderous title of the *Beardstown Chronicle and Illinois Bounty Land Advertiser*. The latter part of the name was typical of several papers started in the Military Bounty Land Tract. Francis Arenz, a young immigrant from Prussia whose name has been perpetuated by the town of Arenzville in Cass County, founded the *Chronicle*. His brother, John A. Arenz, in writing about it later, referred to it as "one of several enterprises he engaged in for developing the new country and incidentally promoting his own business interests." Beardstown at that time was still part of Morgan County. The *Chronicle* carried advertising—mostly legal notices—from ten other counties to the northward, attesting to the absence of newspapers within their bounds. Arenz himself was a Whig but his paper, operating under the editorship of J. B. Fulks, strove to be neutral in politics. After a little more than

one year, the paper was discontinued and the plant was removed to Rushville. Cass County did not have another paper for eleven years.

Two outsiders, seeking a promising new field, gave Peoria its first newspaper. Abram S. Buxton and Henry Wolford, the former an editor and the latter a printer, came from Louisville, Kentucky, and on March 10, 1834, started the *Illinois Champion and Peoria Herald*. The paper set out to be neutral in politics but Buxton's own staunch advocacy of Whig principles soon cropped out and it became partisan. Buxton made an early bid for local favor by urging the removal of the state capital from Springfield to Peoria. The *Champion* had become a popular, if not a financial, success when Buxton contracted consumption and died September 1, 1835, a year and one-half after it was started. Wolford sold out and returned to Louisville. The new owners, James C. Armstrong and Jacob Shewalter, hired Jerome L. Marsh as their printer and ran the paper until the early part of 1837, when they sold it to Samuel H. Davis. Like his predecessor, Davis was a newcomer, having previously been engaged in publishing in Virginia. He enlarged the paper and changed its name to the *Peoria Register and North-Western Gazetteer*. He remained on the fence in politics until the intensity of the campaign of 1840 forced him to fall to one side or the other, and he came out openly in support of the Whigs and backed General Harrison for the presidency.

Abraham Marshall, a lawyer, was the editor of the first newspaper of Rushville—the *Journal and Military Tract Advertiser*, started in May, 1835. He was hired for the post by the publishers, G. W. Scott, a printer from Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and R. W. Renfroe. Like most editors of his day, he was long on editorials and short on local news. Earlier issues carried an abundance of news of far-away Texas but next to none about happenings at home. News traveled slowly in those days. The death of ex-President Madison on June 28, 1836, was not reported until the issue of July 23, almost a month afterwards.

A year after the *Journal and Military Tract Advertiser* was started, it underwent two shifts in ownership and its name was simplified to the *Journal*. In May, 1837, Benjamin V. Teel bought it, renamed it the *Schuylcr Advocate*, and put it in charge of J. B. Fulks. Before another year had passed, another change had taken place. R. A. Glenn became publisher and T. Lyle Dickey editor. They abandoned the policy of neutrality in politics and made the paper an out-and-out Whig organ. But times were bad. They could not collect the accounts due them and after eight months, marked by several interruptions, they gave up the struggle and suspended publication. His brief editorship of the *Test* was but a stepping stone in Dickey's career. Some years later he became a judge of the Illinois State Supreme Court.

Rushville was without a paper for a year after the *Test* withdrew. Then, on December 14, 1839, A. R. Sparks, a politician, started the *Illinois Republican*. Notwithstanding the name, this was started as a Democratic organ. After four months, Sparks went to Washington to take a government job and sold out to James L. Anderson. With the presidential election coming up in the fall, 1840 was a year of intense political activity and Anderson deemed it expedient to change the name to the *Political Examiner*. He continued it thus until the fall of 1843 when, espousing the Whig cause, he renamed the paper after the party. With the defeat of Henry Clay for president in 1844, the *Whig* suspended publication, and Rushville was forced to go without a paper for the following four years.

Tazewell County's pioneer paper was the *Tazewell Whig*, established at Tremont in 1835. There was little other publishing activity in this county during the '30s. There is a record of the *Tazewell Telegraph* being published at Pekin in 1837, but little is known of it. In 1840, a Whig organ under the name of the *Tazewell Reporter* made its appearance but the period of its existence apparently was brief.

The direct relation of early papers to politics is found illustrated in La Salle County. The presidential campaign of 1836 brought forth a Democratic organ at Ottawa bearing the paradoxical name of *Republican*, but it was discontinued after the election. La Salle County did not have another paper until the campaign of 1840, when the *Illinois Free Trader* was established to support Van Buren, the Democratic candidate against Harrison.

Preaching the gospel, practicing medicine and surgery, and conducting a drug business apparently was not enough for the Rev. Gideon B. Perry, D. D., LL. D., so he also became the first editor in Fulton County. With Ptolemy Stone, he began publication of the *Herald* at Canton in 1837. His editorship was brief, however, and Stone may be looked upon as the true newspaper pioneer of Fulton County. The paper went through several changes in names and was known as the *Fulton Telegraph* when it was discontinued in 1841.

The Backwoodsman, started at Grafton in Jersey County in 1837, just five years after the first settlers built their cabins in this community, was more of a magazine than a newspaper. Published monthly by Perry Mason, it was edited by John Russell and was devoted to "literature and agriculture." Russell had literally written his way through Middlebury College in his native state of Missouri, and his "The Venomous Worm," a subtly worded indictment of drink which he wrote anonymously for the *Missourian* while he was teaching school in the Bonhommie bottoms of Missouri, became a classic in Pierpont's and McGuffey's readers. He edited the *Backwoodsman* and served as its chief contributor until it was

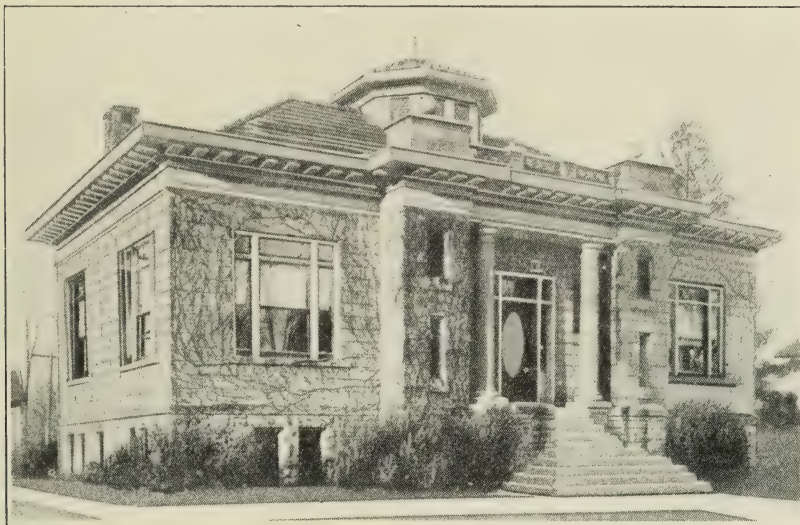
moved to Jerseyville in 1839 when that town became the county seat of Jersey County. *Jersey and Green County Advertiser* was added to its title, but in 1842 it was given the simple name of *Newspaper*.

Putnam County was but sparsely settled when Dr. Wilson Everett started the *Journal* at Hennepin in 1837. As a result he was forced to give it up after it had led a sickly existence for a little more than a year. However, far transcending the importance of a mere local newspaper, a publication which forever will have a place in the annals of the fight against slavery in America soon became associated with the name of Hennepin. On November 8, 1838, this little town became the seat of publication of the *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, the first slavery abolition paper in the country. In the first issue to bear the Hennepin date-line, designated as Vol. 16, No. 1, appeared the following outline of the paper's previous career: "It was commenced in 1821; issued a few months in Ohio; nearly three years in Tennessee; eight years in Maryland and the District of Columbia; and the residue of the period stated it has been published irregularly in the city of Philadelphia. * * *

Its principal design has ever been and will continue to be the advocacy of Free Discussion; the Total Abolition of Slavery; and the firm establishment of the constitutional, inalienable, and 'universal' rights of man."

Benjamin Lundy, the editor and publisher, had relatives in Magnolia and came to Putnam County, destitute but undiscouraged, after he had lost his equipment at the hands of a pro-slavery mob which set fire to Pennsylvania Hall where he had maintained his publication headquarters in Philadelphia. While he selected Hennepin as his new seat of publication, the *Genius* actually was printed in Lowell, La Salle County, and was mailed from Vermillionville, across the river. Lowell was being hailed as "the city of the future." Lundy's friends provided a plant for him there in a building 12 feet square and equipped with an old press and second-hand type that was almost worn out. John Lovejoy, brother of Elijah P. Lovejoy, the Alton martyr, came to help with the work. In 1839 Zebina Eastman of Springfield became Lundy's assistant. To help defray the expenses. Lundy operated a farm on the side. Far from robust, he over-exerted in the harvest fields in 1839 and died on August 22 of that year. Eastman issued the paper for a time after Lundy's death. Then, in December, 1840, it was reorganized as the *Genius of Liberty* by the La Salle County Anti-Slavery Society, with Eastman and Hooper Warren as editors and publication agents. Beginning in July, 1841, it was the official organ of the Illinois Anti-Slavery Society. Publication was suspended in April, 1842, but was resumed three months later in Chicago under the name of the *Western Citizen*.

A group of citizens at Lacon decided in 1837 that the town needed



LIBRARY, JERSEYVILLE



JERSEY COUNTY COURTHOUSE, JERSEYVILLE

a newspaper. Accordingly they raised \$2,000 and contracted with Allen N. Ford, a printer from Hartford, Connecticut, to conduct a paper for at least two years. On December 13, the first issue of the *Lacon Herald* made its appearance. It was lacking in local news and facetious matter, but was crammed with "solid instruction and useful information." It succeeded, however, and Ford did not hold himself to the minimum of two years prescribed by his contract. He remained as editor for twenty years. He changed the name in 1840 to the *Illinois Gazette*, and in 1866 it became known as the *Home Journal*. No paper in the Illinois Valley today can trace a purer line of descent than the *Lacon Home Journal*.

The *Joliet Courier*, Will County's first paper, owed its start in 1839 likewise to civic pride. Thirteen citizens formed the *Courier* Company, with three of them as publishers and C. H. Blach as editor and printer. The *Courier* continued until 1843, when it passed into the hands of William E. Little and he changed its name to the *Signal*.

FROM 1841 TO 1865

The crystallizing of politics on definite party lines, the rising crescendo of the slavery question, the resultant shifts and realignments that brought about the organization of the Republican party in Illinois, and finally the Civil war, all played important roles in the shaping of the newspapers of the valley during the period from 1841 to 1865. For, as previously noted, while the early journalists left many gaps in their casual record of the general development of the state and valley, they did pass down a fairly complete account of the political trends of the day, on a state and national basis, if not locally.

Aside from the influence exercised by politics, we find a steady increase in the number of papers, following normally the growth of centers heretofore not populous enough to warrant publications; and coincident with the introduction of the telegraph and the coming of the railroad in the state, we are able to trace the first daily papers of this area and certain other tendencies toward the more enterprising type of journalism we know today.

In the main, however, no immediate change in the general tone of the papers was to be noted. The ventures made into the daily field were restricted to a few of the populous centers and were not at first marked by any great degree of success. The majority of the papers of the valley remained of the country weekly class throughout the period.

Violent political partisanship prevailed as in the previous decade. An example of the personal bitterness in which some of the editors involved themselves is found in the experience of Philip Payne of the *Bureau County Herald* at Princeton (1848). He started the *Herald* as a Democratic paper

but soon he was quarreling so vigorously both with the opposition party and the leaders of his own, and aroused so much animosity on all sides, that he was run out of the county. The devices of cunning and sarcasm employed sometimes by editors to achieve their political ends are no better illustrated than by the very title of the *True Democrat* (1847) at Joliet. This paper from the start was decidedly Whig in all of its principles and teachings, and later was identified with the Republican movement. The name *True Democrat*, obviously coined to cast ironic aspersion on the Democratic party, was retained, however, until 1862 when it was changed to *Republican*. As another instance of party rivalry between papers, the case of the *Lewistown Republican* might be cited. This was a Whig organ and the *Illinois Public Ledger* in the same town was Democratic. The *Republican* ran into financial difficulties, yet rather than give up and leave its party undefended against its foe, continued to operate at a loss until the *Public Ledger* finally was moved to Canton in 1854. Then it quietly folded up. Henry Walker, a Canton patriot, bought a one-third interest in the *Public Ledger* to win it away from Canton's hated rival, Lewistown.

Editorials, occupying foremost prominence, continued to be lengthy and often verbose. When the *Fulton Democrat* was launched at Lewistown (1855), it carried a salutatory three and one-half columns long. Shears and paste-pot were still as necessary an adjunct to the "front office" as type and press were to the print shop. John Bideman who, after the *Illinois Public Ledger* was moved to Canton, started printing "locals" in its columns, is pointed out by local historians as a pioneer in the introduction of this form of news.

In the smaller, more remote towns, the printing business had made little progress in overcoming commercial and physical handicaps. Although railroad lines were being rapidly extended over the state in the early '50s, the *Prairie Telegraph* at Rushville was still dependent upon river transportation for its paper supply, shipping it up from St. Louis via Frederick. One spring—a cold and backward spring—all the paper was used up before the ice went out of the river, and J. Corrie Scripps, associated with his father as publisher, found it necessary to drive all night, first to Springfield and then to Peoria, for a relief supply in order to get to press on time. This paper seems to have displayed more than ordinary enterprise on a number of occasions. It justified its name the day the telegraph line into Rushville was completed by printing a news dispatch from St. Louis. To be able to report an event within twenty-four hours of its occurrence was something radically new. At another time, it gave its readers an unprecedented treat by printing the full text of the President's message to Congress.

Occasionally, papers had individual axes which they sought to grind

through agitation in their columns. Some of these motives were political, some not. Joseph W. Ormsbee established the *Battle Axe* at Exeter, Scott County, to advocate the repudiation of the public debt, but after sixteen issues sold it to James Monroe Ruggles who moved it to Winchester. S. DeWitt Drown published the *Gerrymander* at Peoria for a period in 1843 as a medium for ridiculing the action of the Legislature of 1842-43 in dividing the state in such a way as to make but one Whig congressional district in seven. While Z. N. Garbutt was editor of the *Pike County Free Press* at Pittsfield (1846) he waged war on all forms of secret societies. An association of Irishmen published a paper called the *United Irishman* at Ottawa (1848) to urge a "repeal of the nefarious Legislative Union between England and Ireland which has not enriched England but made Ireland poor indeed." During the winter of 1848-49, Virginia in Cass County had a scandal-mongering "society" paper known as the *Owl*. Dr. S. Allen Paddock published the *Yeoman of the Prairie Land* at Princeton (1851) as a means of conveying to the old states back east something of the glories of the new West. The *Cass County Times* was established at Virginia in 1856 by Richard S. Thomas to promote the interests of the Illinois River Railroad of which he was president. The *Stark County Democrat* was issued by the Douglas Club at Toulon during the presidential campaign in 1860 and died with Douglas' defeat. The *Campaign Argument* was published for a similar period at Jacksonville the same year.

It is no wonder that Sylvester Emmons used the *Beardstown Gazette*, which he established in 1845, to oppose Mormonism as well as propound his political stand in favor of the Whigs and against the Democrats. Emmons was the editor of the *Expositor*, which a group of Mormon revolvers launched at Nauvoo June 7, 1844, to expose and attack the despotic policies of Joseph Smith. Just one issue was published and Smith had the paper declared a nuisance and its equipment destroyed. This was one of the events leading to the murder of Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum. The sponsors of the paper fled and Emmons took refuge at Beardstown.

A few editors who attempted to maintain a strict independence on party issues found it difficult to avoid partisanship and succeed. The best example of these was Jonathan Baldwin Turner of eleven-column editorial fame, whose preference for discussion of politics to the dissemination of news has already been referred to. Turner's *Illinois Statesman* at Jacksonville (1843) is regarded as the first wholly independent paper in the state. He announced at the outset that it would be "devoted to the interests of no party whatever, political, moral, social, or ecclesiastical." In his second issue, Turner proposed a great bi-party paper at

Washington, supplemented by similar organs in all the state capitals, to "mitigate the ferocity of party zeal" and defend the public from "low ribaldry, sophistry, and abuse." This dream, however, was never realized. Indeed, Turner's own paper was forced to discontinue at the end of one year. Ebenezer Higgins had an inspiration along the same lines a few years later when he started the *Bureau Advocate* at Princeton, late in 1847. He divided his editorial page into three departments of two columns each, given over to the Whig, Democratic, and Liberty parties, respectively, and each in charge of a committee of party leaders. Deprecating violent party spirit, Higgins pleaded, "Come let us reason together," and gave assurance that "all patrons who want fish, flesh or fowl can glut themselves in the *Advocate* columns." This arrangement was a brilliant success at first, but lasted for less than a year. The *Advocate* passed from Higgins' control and became an out-and-out Free Soil organ.

The first daily newspaper in Illinois was started at Chicago in 1839, but it was nine years later before Pickett and Davis tried to make a daily out of the *Weekly Register* at Peoria. Between then and the Civil war, attempts to start dailies were made in Jacksonville, Peru and Beardstown, but sooner or later all failed. The publishers of the Jacksonville *Constitutionist* undertook to establish a daily edition in 1854 but discontinued it after a short time. For ten months the Peru *Chronicle* was published as a daily and then given up. The *Central Illinoisan* at Beardstown was converted into a daily in 1858 and continued until the outbreak of the war, when the editor closed up shop and enlisted. Not until after several disappointing failures were Thomas J. Pickett and his contemporaries able to give Peoria anything like a permanent daily press. A detailed sketch will be given of their struggles because of the light it sheds upon the period of transition between weeklies and dailies, and because of the part they had in the politics of the period.

Pickett was a man of ambition and unquenchable energy, but was often prevented by unsympathetic whims of fortune from fully realizing his aims. During his career he was identified with a dozen newspaper ventures in Illinois, Kentucky, and Nebraska, and when he died at the age of 70 he was associated with his son on a paper at Ashland, Wisconsin. Three years after he and H. K. W. Davis had acquired the *Register* at Peoria, they started issuing a daily on June 28, 1848,—the first in Peoria and the Illinois Valley. Their enterprise apparently was in advance of the times, however, and after a few months they had to give it up. Undaunted, Pickett followed up his determination the following year and in December, 1849, put out the first issue of the *Daily Champion*, named in honor of Peoria's first paper. Tragedy, however, cut this venture short scarcely six weeks after its beginning when, on January 26, 1850, an explosion wrecked the plant and not only killed the proprietor's brother,

William Pickett, but also James Kirkpatrick of the *Peoria American*, who was passing by in "Printer's Alley" and was caught under the falling walls. Still Pickett persisted. He bought a new outfit and in June of the same year established a new paper called the *Republican*. It was a weekly and tri-weekly at first, but became a daily in 1853 and continued for several years.

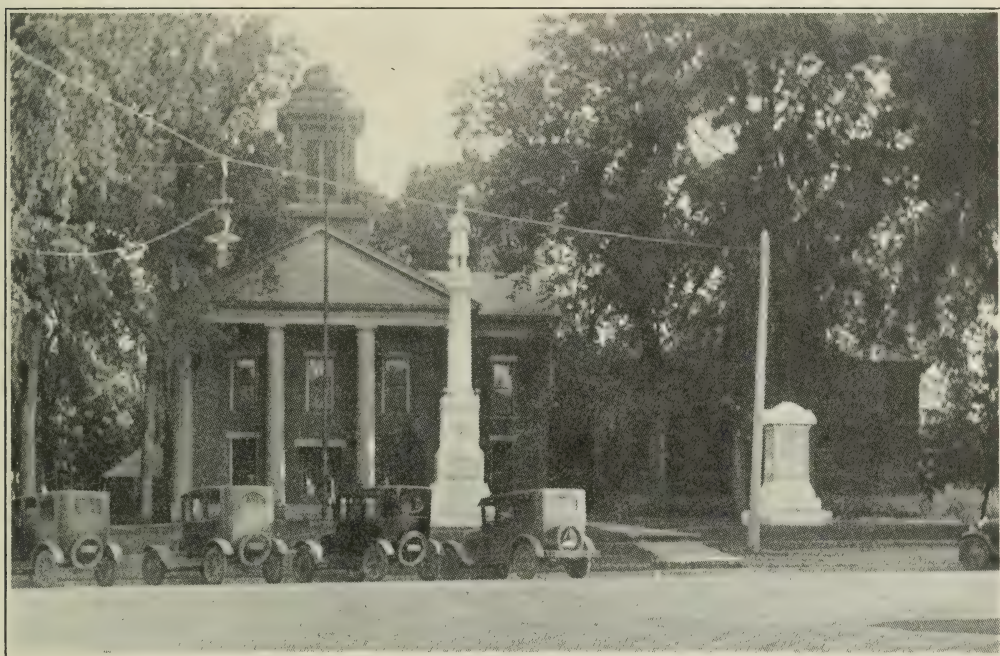
Meanwhile, another daily had come into being in Peoria, of opposite political complexion. George W. Raney started the *Peoria Daily News* in May, 1852, as a Democratic organ, and adopted a slashing style that, in a later year, might have been classified as "yellow journalism." His originality achieved success and in time he absorbed his rival in the Democratic field—the *Democratic Press*. Established during the exciting Harrison-Van Buren presidential fight of 1840 to espouse the cause of Van Buren, the *Democratic Press* was the first paper in Peoria to be strictly a party organ. It passed through several changes in control until Enoch P. Sloan, a son-in-law of the founder and one of its original owners, assumed charge in 1851. The *Daily News* having entered the field in 1852, and Pickett having succeeded in making a daily of the *Republican* the following year, Sloan launched a daily edition of the *Democratic Press* in 1854. Thus we find Peoria at this time with three dailies, rivals not only commercially but politically, two of them against each other for the favor of the Democrats and the other rivaling them both as exponent of the opposition party.

The inter-party rivalry of Sloan and Pickett took a personal turn in 1856 when the two publishers became opposing candidates for clerk of the circuit court of Peoria County. Sloan won the election and relinquished his journalistic career to enter public office; Pickett lost and moved to Rock Island to make a fresh start with a new paper. Thus deserted by their leaders, the *Republican* and the *Democratic Press* were doomed, with the shifting of political fates, to pass out of the picture within the next two years. Pickett, through the columns of the *Republican* had supported the Whig cause until the break-up of old party lines which the Kansas-Nebraska bill brought about in 1854-56, and then became one of the organizers of the Republican movement in Illinois. When he became a candidate for office in 1856, the *Republican* passed into the hands of Samuel L. Coulter, who turned its support from the new party back to the dying cause of the Whigs. The paper ceased to exist two years later. A similar fate was in store for the *Democratic Press*. Upon Sloan's retirement, it was sold to Leonard B. Cornwell, an ex-sheriff. It had been a strong supporter of Douglas but when Buchanan was elected president, the party patronage passed to Raney's *Daily News*. In the winter of 1857-58, the plant of the *Daily News* was destroyed by fire, and

Raney bought what was left of the *Democratic Press* and started a new paper under the name of the *Democratic Union*. This became one of the strongest Democratic organs of the valley. In the campaign of 1860, Raney relinquished the editorship in favor of William Trench, who ardently supported Douglas for president. With Douglas' defeat by Lincoln, Raney again took charge but the paper was discontinued in 1862 when Raney went to war.

The *Transcript*, started in 1855, is the only paper of this period to which the present press of Peoria can trace lineage. William Rousenville, one-time pastor of the Universalist Church of Peoria and grand master of the Odd Fellows of Illinois, was its founder. As long as he was its editor, through a succession of financial vicissitudes and changes in ownership, it supported the Democratic party. When Nathan C. Geer assumed control in 1859 he changed it to Republican, and under Enoch Emery the following year, it became a foremost Republican organ, staunchly supporting Lincoln in the campaign of 1860 and throughout the war.

These shifts in political adherence at Peoria represent but a part of a general reshaping of party lines throughout the valley and state, in which the press was an important factor. Engendered by widespread dissension over the slavery issue as brought to bear by the Kansas-Nebraska bill, the process of realignment begun in 1854 resulted in the organization of the Republican party, and found an outcome in the election of Lincoln and the outbreak of the Civil war. A definite disruption was wrought in the Whig party, and a revolt against Douglas occurred within the Democratic ranks. This left groups of "Free" Whigs and "Free" Democrats at large but did not result at once in the formation of a new party as the opportunity for a coalition might suggest. In fact, it worked out that the insurgent Democrats had comparatively little to do with Republican movement in Illinois. There was new-party agitation among them in several localities, and a convention was called at Springfield in October, 1854, but this proved unfruitful. The "Free" Democrats pretty well lost their identity. Meanwhile, the Whigs of the state were slow in acting. It was two years after Republican organizations had been formed in Wisconsin and Michigan that like action was taken in Illinois. This was done at the instance of a group of anti-Nebraska editors. Responding to a suggestion by Paul Selby of the *Morgan Journal* (Jacksonville), they met at Decatur on February 22, 1856. Selby was chairman and other valley editors who took part included Thomas J. Pickett of the *Peoria Republican*, Charles Faxon of the *Princeton Post*, A. N. Ford of the *Illinois Gazette* (Lacon). Abraham Lincoln "sat in" with them and helped them draft a platform and organize a state central com-



STARK COUNTY COURTHOUSE, TOULON



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mittee. The first Republican state convention followed in May at Bloomington.

With this turn of events, Whig papers generally became supporters of the Republican party, as the *Morgan Journal* (Jacksonville), *Pike County Free Press* (Pittsfield), *Central Illinoisan* (Beardstown), *Ottawa Republican*, and *Peoria Republican*. But not all of the Whig identity followed along. A notable example was the *Jacksonville Sentinel* which became Democratic after the Whig party broke up. Likewise, the *Carrollton Gazette*, which supported John C. Fremont for president in 1856, turned Democratic after Buchanan was elected. When the *Tazewell Register* (Pekin) changed ownership in 1858, it deserted its Republican tendencies and was made a Democratic organ. On the other hand, some of the Democratic papers refused to stay in line. The *Canton Register*, which had leaned toward Democracy until the fight over the Kansas-Nebraska bill, joined the Republican cause in 1856. The *Illinois Banner*, a German paper at Peoria, made a like switch in 1859 when it became the *Zeitung*. The *Winchester Democrat* became Republican in support with a change in control in 1862. Newspapers were started by followers of both causes, and papers which hitherto had been independent were drawn one way or the other.

With party lines thus sharply drawn, the Lincoln-Douglas senatorial campaign of 1858, the presidential campaign of 1860, and the events leading to the Civil war made the newspapers an arena of intense political conflict.

The war itself had a marked effect on the newspaper business of the valley and the state at large. The dailies of the large cities, particularly those of Chicago and St. Louis, saw their circulations grow by leaps and bounds in response to the public's anxiety for news from the battle fields and from Washington. But they thrived at the cost of the weeklies of smaller towns which constituted a majority of the valley's press. Increased costs of paper stock, together with the inability to supply their readers with the latest news of the war, made competition with the big-city dailies difficult.

The call to arms drew on the man-power of not a few of the papers, causing some to suspend publication temporarily or go out of business entirely. B. C. Drake discontinued the *Central Illinoisan* at Beardstown when he enlisted in 1861. The *Democratic Union* at Peoria went out of existence the following year when its editor, George W. Raney, took a post in the army. The *Canton Register* was suspended for two months in 1862 while its proprietors were away fighting. The Grable Brothers were able to leave their *Putnam County Standard* at Hennepin in charge of their father when they went to war. Other publishers, not so fortunate,

left their papers in less competent hands and returned from battle to find them reduced in quality or no longer running.

Papers which took a stand with the losing side found it difficult to survive. The *Mendota Times* was among a number in the state which were forcibly discontinued by violence or public opinion. A Mr. Fisk had started the *Times* in 1859 as a Democratic and pro-slavery sheet, and when he was declared to be a Copperhead early in 1861, a recruiting company forced him to haul up a Union flag and make a speech in behalf of the Union cause. Fearing more violent treatment, he quit his paper and fled.

FROM THE CLOSE OF THE CIVIL WAR ON

A natural decline followed in the wake of the Civil war, but once this was overcome, the story of the Illinois Valley's newspapers devolved into one of development and numerical increase. The development has taken place among the city dailies. The numerical increase applies to the so-called rural or country-town press. Fully half of the towns in the valley did not have newspapers until after the Civil war. During the late '60s, the '70s, and '80s, papers were started in these communities in accordance with their growth, but most of them have never become populous enough to support anything but weeklies. The development of dailies in the larger centers took place in the same and even later decades, most of them being converted from weeklies already in existence. Daily papers had been previously attempted with indifferent success in several towns, but at the close of the Civil war Peoria appears to have been the only place in the valley where a daily was being published.

During the period which followed, the daily of the city and the weekly of the small town found their respective places. The daily press made its effects felt, first by encroachment from the metropolitan centers (notably Chicago and St. Louis), and then by its invasion of the cities of the valley with circulations encompassing the neighboring territories. This has tended to weaken the influence of the weeklies, politically and otherwise. Gradually, the country editors have relinquished their vigorous stands on politics and public issues. More and more their papers have become merely journals of the happenings of their home communities, supplementary to the more comprehensive mission of the daily press.

At the same time, there has been evolved a standardization of both weeklies and dailies, in their contents as well as physical make-up. By degrees, it has replaced the striking, sometimes colorful, individualism which, often reflecting the editor's own personality, marked the newspaper of earlier periods. The coöperative telegraph news associations, a

unified style of reporting, and a standard editorial page pattern have contributed to doing this for the dailies. Patent insides and "boiler plate," as much as anything else, have influenced the weeklies in the same direction. Even before the Civil war was over, the patent inside made its appearance. It was developed to provide the harassed country editor with an easy short-cut, enabling him to buy his paper already half printed. Similarly helpful have become the stereotyped columns of miscellaneous reading matter, disparagingly designated as "boiler plate," which the editor can "throw in" at the last minute as filler if it is needed. The actual benefit of these aids to the rural press is a question in dispute. It may be argued that they have tended to lower the native literary quality of the papers, and stifled the editors' initiative and originality. On the other hand, they have been the means of saving many struggling papers from the rocks, and have made possible the establishment of others where publication enterprises otherwise would have been retarded. There are, of course, weekly papers of the more prosperous type usually found in county-seat towns that disdain the use of these ready-made accessories and flaunt the boast, "All home print." But they are in the minority.

Inventive genius, as expressed in typesetting machines and improved printing presses, has been an incalculable factor in newspapers during the last half century, just as improved transportation and communication facilities wielded their helpful effect in earlier periods. The daily press in particular owes much of its present high degree of speed and efficiency to these mechanical improvements.

Statistics reveal that at different times, towns both large and small have had more papers than needed to serve their public adequately. In 1880 Peoria had no less than six dailies, and frequently there would be a thriving county-seat town with three or four weeklies where one would have been sufficient to fulfill the actual functions of a newspaper. Mergers and suspensions, with the pressure of economic necessity, have eliminated much of this duplication and brought a better balanced distribution. Today we find the Illinois Valley served adequately and well by its newspapers from one end to the other. More than a dozen of its cities support dailies, and some of the finest specimens of small-town weeklies to be found anywhere are published within its bounds.

CHAPTER XVII

THE OLD TIME SOCIAL LIFE

The pioneer life of Illinois 100 years ago was tremendously monotonous. Their work was crude, unvarying and exacting and no less was the food of the table though nourishing marked with little variety and little appeal to the aesthetic sense. But perhaps greatest of all the deadening influences was distance or isolation. It is hard for us today when families of Illinois are classified as one-car, two-car, or three-car families, to sense the deadening effect of isolation and separation from their fellow man. Nowhere in America today unless it would be among the mountain whites of the southern Cumberlands can one come face to face with this isolation due to distance which kills human initiative and especially the natural inquisitiveness of man. Only here among these people one can catch yet the hunger for human mass association in their crowded mountain church with its "dinner on the grounds" where there is a minimum of conversational interplay and where social satisfaction seems to come from merely proximity with others.

The difficulty of travel in primitive Illinois was, of course, not to be compared to that of the Cumberlands. Here human beings found social releases in the political mass meetings, the universal stump speech and particularly in the enormous crowds which gathered for camp meetings so typical of the frontier. Perhaps it was also typical that many a man found his escape from the spell of monotony in the use of spirituous liquors which was particularly prevalent in the life of Illinois 100 years ago. But with the improvement of transportation there soon came to be more common and accessible forms of social release. The hospitality of the pioneer home is a truism and the pioneer and his family found much of spiritual and social stimulation in the old time "visits," especially on Sundays, when it was nothing unusual to find several entire families gathered about a home, the boys and girls in sufficient number to engage in characteristic games and sports, the men to talk politics and to view or examine the problems of livestock and agriculture and talk over their successes and failures, while the women folks prepared a bounteous repast in the noon-day meal. Such a Sunday furnished a great antidote for the monotony and hard work for the ensuing week. Especially during the winter months the population, particularly the youth, found relaxation

and stimulation in the old-time "sociables," held usually in a private home, sometimes merely engaging in conversation and food and light games and under other auspices becoming the country dance where the boys and girls of the neighborhood found great glee in the old-time square dances. At the "house raisings" and corn huskings the women vied with the men in the festivities. These gatherings usually ended in a dance, and greatly prized was the cheerful fiddle.

The contribution of the primitive church was so vital and dynamic and so varied in its expressions that it has seemed wise to give it a separate chapter.

In the little old primitive schoolhouse centered many an activity in the evening hours of the dull winter. Here were held the spelling bees and the occasional singing school and most typical of all the frontier intellectual releases, the lyceum or country debating society.

ORIGIN OF THE MOVEMENT

Lyceum debating societies began to flourish in an exuberant mushroom growth soon after the Declaration of Independence. Probably the movement began on the New England seaboard, but the institution had no size, nor momentum until it reached the frontier of western Pennsylvania, New York, and Ohio. It was carried by the frontier, spread with the frontier, into the Northwest Territory.

It was natural that that bellicose variety of intellectual activity thrive with the frontier. Those striking characteristics of the frontier intellect which Professor Turner describes as "coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness * * * that restless, nervous energy, that dominant individualism working for good and for evil, and withal that buoyance and exuberance which comes with freedom," those hardy mental traits of the frontier found a happy milieu of expression in the Lyceum Debating Society.

The chronology of the movement is nebulous. Kenable states in his "Beginnings of Literary Culture in the Ohio Valley" that the "people's lyceum, or debating society, had its golden age in seventy-five years following the great first Fourth of July." And adds with considerable derision, "In these last years of the century, women are the leaders in such culture as may be obtained in literary clubs." However, in Illinois, at least, there were more lusty, vigorous debating societies after 1850 than before and there is recorded one instance, down on the Illinois River in Fulton County where there is a county debating society at this very day. While these later institutions are clearly vestigial remains of a hardy earlier growth, one can certainly say that the debating society belongs to the nineteenth century from beginning to end.

The origin of the debating society is also uncertain. Its roots perhaps

stretch back to England. Lord Mansfield, the great British jurist who lived from 1705 to 1793 belonged to a debating society at Lincoln's Inn and Jack Curran, an Irish orator and advocate of the same period, while studying at an Inn of Court belonged to "a society which named him Orator Mum because he was at that time such a failure as a speaker." The first twenty years of the nineteenth century saw the growth in many parts of industrial England of mutual improvement societies, which led in their turn to the formation of the Mechanics' Institutes. These held debates and lectures and also procured libraries and gave instruction in reading and writing.

It has been suggested that the Chautauqua Lyceum Movement of the Eastern states which began in Western Massachusetts, the first at Middleton, in the autumn of 1826 was "in imitation, doubtless, of the Mechanics' Institutes of England, which Lord Brougham and the *Edinburgh Review* had done so much to bring into notice." What may be said of this influence upon the Eastern lyceum, can also be said of the Western Lyceum debating society, although the two, of the same genus, were of entirely different species.

The former was the Lyceum of the later Chautauqua, of scientific lecturers, and the great triumvirate of lyceum orators, Phillips, Everett, and Ingersoll. This movement spread through New England. Essex County, Massachusetts, had twenty-six towns, and twenty-three lyceums. In 1829 they had made such progress in the commonwealth, that a public meeting was held in Boston consisting of members of the Legislature with a view to give form and system to the movement by means of state and county institutions. Before 1870, Concord's lyceum had held 784 lectures, 105 debates, and 14 concerts. This mustard seed from Edinburgh's Mechanics' Institutes grew with tremendous vitality. Quite inevitably it pushed to the West. As early as 1827, a Buffalo, New York, Lyceum was formed for the purpose of promoting scientific study. It bought electrical equipment and paid for it by exacting \$2 annual dues. Silas Farmer tells of Detroit's Young Men's Society which grew into the Lyceum of the City of Detroit. Chicago's lyceum, founded at the same period, lived to expand into the Young Men's Association, later the Chicago Library Association, "from whose ashes" declares the *Chicago Tribune* of November 25, 1872, "sprang the grand phoenix of the Chicago Library Building." Springfield, Illinois, had a lyceum. It was before this body that Lincoln delivered, January 27, 1837, an address entitled "The Perpetuation of our Political Institutions." The raw tyro legislator, rough as the prairie soil he grew out of, warned vigorously against the rotting of our civilization from within, against disrespect of law. And the oration contains this sentence, so different from the later Lincoln,

yet so like the later Lincoln: "Reason, cold, calculating, unimpassioned reason—must furnish all the materials for our future hope and defense."

While these lyceums—which Roosevelt declared in 1917 were "the most American thing in America"—were of altogether different complexion from the frontier debating club, which began about a half century later, and were a far more urbane institution; at times the line dividing them from the frontier debating club is very dim. It would be an exaggeration to say that the debating society was the undomesticated variety of the lyceum or that it was this Eastern Chautauqua lyceum torn away from its original environment. These societies were endowed with all the crudities of the rough West. Though the two were separate and distinct institutions, great was the influence each had upon the other.

The debating society was often an adjunct to some seminary or academy. All of the colleges of the nineteenth century United States nurtured debating societies. Very often they opened their doors to outsiders. Andrew Johnson, as an example, walked four miles to attend a society which was connected with Greenville College, a little freshwater institution on the banks of the Nolichucky River in Tennessee. He was not enrolled in the college but found here a welcome opportunity to participate with the college people. And of course, when a student went home from such an institution where a debating society existed, he carried an enthusiasm for debating societies with him.

Professor Pease gives a great deal of the credit for propagating the gospel of debating societies to the press. "It was the papers," he says, "which encouraged the lyceums that came intermittently to afford training in debate, to offer lectures in science, literature, and phrenology, and to urge preservation of the history of the state." Such items as this from the *Oquawka Spectator* of November 27, 1857, often started the ball rolling: "The long winter evenings are upon us. * * * (A lyceum) would afford a profitable place of resort for all classes, many of whom, for want of such an association, might be thrown within the circle of an influence less calculated to benefit them. * * * In conformity with the expressed wishes of those with whom we have conversed, we take this occasion to suggest that a meeting be held at the Courthouse this Friday evening." The sparse periodicals of the Middle West encouraged the movement. The *Literary Journal and Monthly Review* of December, 1844, contains a verbose editorial exhorting its subscribers to form lyceum groups. And as in the above quotation, the motive here, too, seems to be one of morality, to provide a beneficial form of amusement, lest one less beneficial be substituted in its place: "During the season of long evenings, many, particularly the young, will pass much time in some kind of amusement, and unless such as is provided



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is of a high and improving character, that of a low and degrading nature will be to some extent, at least, indulged."

The "History of Bureau County," written in 1885 by H. C. Bradsby, has this to say of the start and spread of the lyceum debating society: "Fifty or more years ago in perhaps every then-organized county in the land, the comparative joys of 'pursuit and possession' or the comparative horrors of the penitentiary and the hangman's rope were fanning the latent fires of the young Ciceros and Demosthenes. The intellectual fruit was then as it is now a winter's growth entirely and flourished during the three months' winter school. The chief instigator and the commanding intellectual figure was usually the teacher who was working for \$10 or \$12 a month and 'board round.' * * * These were the primitive literary clubs, commencing nearly always in the chief town of the county and from here extending to the farthest outlying school district." There follows a description of the officious, legalistic manner in which the Bureau County Lyceum, like many others, was incorporated: "As early as 1836, before Bureau County was formed, some of the early settlers had taken steps to form a literary society. * * * They met together and by a vote determined to incorporate the Putnam County Lyceum. When Bureau County was created, a meeting of this society was called, and on a motion of John Templeton, it was unanimously resolved to change the name from the Putnam County Lyceum to that of the Bureau County Lyceum. This action was duly spread upon the records of the county court of Bureau County."

To write the story of the debating society would be to write the story of a state of mind, rather than the story of an institution. It was natural for the nineteenth century American to debate. Horace Greeley in his memoirs tells how he and his brothers amused themselves on winter evenings by holding debates, and drafting their father as the critic judge. The *Oquawka Spectator* for February 6, 1855, devotes almost a complete column of its humor page to ridiculous speeches alleged to have been given before debating societies. In that publication items such as these abound: "At a debating society in Schenectady, the subject for discussion was 'Which is the most beautiful production—a girl or a strawberry?'" "A debating club recently had up the following question: 'If a man has a tiger by the tail, which is best for his personal safety, to hold on or to let go?' Decided in the Negative." An institution must be genuinely a part of a people's life to find a way into their humor.

Debating was a universal and chronic malady in the nineteenth century. Fearon in "Sketches of America—a Report to Thirty-four prospective English emigrant families," wrote of his trip in 1818 to America: "In the steerage were thirteen passengers. These paid twelve pounds each, and had to find themselves in everything but water. Among them

was a Mr. Davis, an ingenious, clever man. He organized a debating society which was held in the steerage twice a week 'weather permitting.' Young Mr. Adams and myself frequently attended their somber discussions. Upon one occasion the question was, 'Which is the better form of government, a democracy or a monarchy?' It was strongly contested on both sides and at length determined in favor of the former by the casting vote of the chairman—who was seated in presidential state on a water cask."

It even got into literature. Edgar Lee Masters in "Spoon River Anthology" chronicles the sad fate of Oak Tufts whom Grecian moonlight and the necropolis of Memphis inspired to reform the world, and who hastened back to Spoon River.

"Then Jonathan Smith Somers challenged me to a debate.

The subject (I taking the negative):

'Pontius Pilot, The Greatest Philosopher of the World.'

And he won the debate by saying at last,

'Before you reform the world, Mr. Tutt,

Please answer the question of Pontius Pilate,

What is Truth?'"

It was in the air. And the debating society flourished in the Middle West like the green bay tree. Who planted it we cannot say. It was nourished and watered by the factors such as The Mechanics' Institutes, The Eastern Lyceum, Seminaries and Colleges, country school teachers, and the New England town-meeting.

Unfortunately, the lyceum debating society did not leave behind it many footsteps on the sands of time. There are available a few old minute books, it is mentioned but with extreme brevity in a few county histories and pioneers' reminiscences, it is mentioned by but one or two of the swarm of European travelers who wrote of their impressions of the American prairie; one can dig crumbs of information out of old newspaper files; there are useful if scattered accounts in many biographies, and one can still interview old pioneers who knew the debating society as it was conducted in the second half of the nineteenth century. If, for example, Lake County, Indiana, is typical of this vast Middle West, a county where T. H. Ball claims "the number of literary societies has never been counted; in every township, one or more has had an existence,"¹ then surely there ought to be a wealth of information concerning them still extant. That there is not is explicable by the fact that the writers who describe early conditions of the middle country are chiefly concerned with the more tangible, material growth of the state; politics, the building of cities, churches, schools, and public improvements. The

1—T. H. Ball—"Northwestern Indiana, 1800-1900," pp. 423-424.

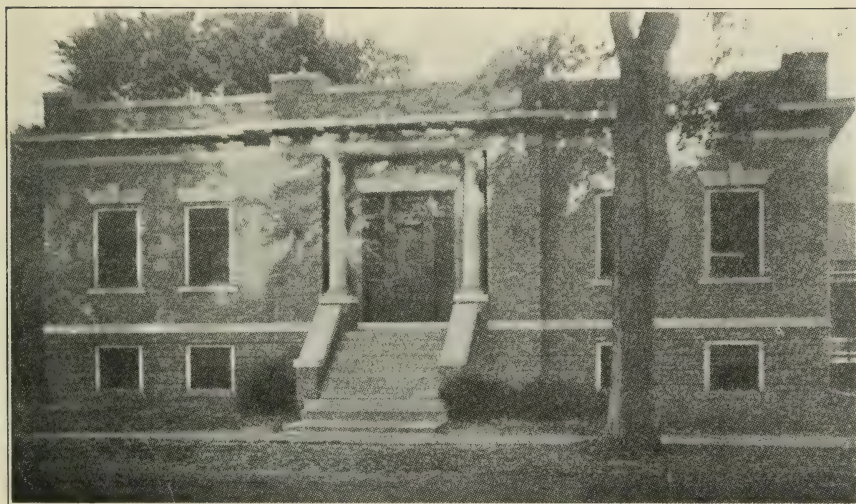
sporadic existence of countless little debating societies, with no permanent organization, was not regarded as of sufficient importance to chronicle.

However, from the accounts that are available, one discovers a surprising conformity in pattern, so that he can form a fairly accurate picture of the typical society.

They were all held in the winter. From November to March, the long winter evenings were broken usually each Friday night, by the meeting of the lyceum. Usually the place of meeting was the schoolhouse, for the schoolhouse served like an omnibus for all kinds of community activities. The *Fond du Lac* (Wisc.) *Journal* for February 7, 1849, reports an extensive conflagration. "During the night of the 12th ultimo, the Congregational, Baptist, and Methodist churches, the former courthouse, the academy, the town hall, and the village lyceum were all destroyed by fire. They were all, we should hasten to add, included in one and the same building, which was the village schoolhouse." Sometimes the courthouse served this purpose. The Lyceum at Oquawka, Illinois, met in the courthouse and in the *Oquawka Spectator* for January 1, 1858, there is an item: "The Literary Society has been prevented from holding its accustomed meetings for two weeks on account of the session of court." A traveler through Indiana in 1840 describes a scene in the courthouse of Center-ville, Indiana. "The Lyceum I found of greater interest to me than any form of entertainment I have as yet encountered in the Western country. * * * (it) meets weekly in the courthouse at 6 o'clock in the evening, and the public generally is invited to attend. The question for the evening was, 'Would it be consistent with the genius of our institutions to add additional qualifications other than the present to the right of suffrage in this state?' Last week, I was told, the question was, 'Has Congress the Constitutional power to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, and, if they have, would it be policy to exercise it?' The meeting was well attended, many females being among the listeners. * * * The scene was an interesting one. The western window and the early hour of meeting made candlelight unnecessary in the early part of the evening and the rays of the setting sun shone in upon the intent faces of the gathering, some in staid Quaker garments, others in worldly clothing of fine broadcloth with high stocks and ruffled shirt fronts, and I had to admit to myself that nothing more enhances female beauty than the dove-colored garments and snowy kerchiefs prescribed by the religion of the Friend." Sometimes, the debating club was more exclusive and met at the home of one of the members. There was a cluster of such organizations at Jacksonville, Illinois. These, while not country debating societies, were clearly in the same category. "The Club" was organized in 1861. During its first three meetings the minutes show that the fol-

lowing questions were debated: "What should be the immediate policy of the government in respect to the slave proposition?" "Ought Major General Fremont now to resign?" "What method of treatment should be adopted toward the African race in event of emancipation and restoration of peace?" The Literary Union was formed in 1864 with the constitution expressing its object: "To promote useful knowledge and correct taste among its members, and to devise plans for the good of society." The program took four forms—"conversation, debate, essay, and select reading." The Sorosis, founded in 1868 was a forerunner of the present day women's club. Some of the questions upon which the early Sorosis held debates were: "Shall capital punishment be abolished?" "The Alabama Claims." "The tenure of office bill." "Is there a stamp of femininity on the writings of women?" "Is equal mental and physical education essential for boys and girls?" "Should the immigration of the Chinese be encouraged?"

Although nearly every community at some time or other during the century had a society, they seldom lasted more than a few years at a time. They bloomed for a spell and then died out, perhaps to reappear again some years later. Sanford C. Cox, in a volume of reminiscences published in 1860 and giving the history of early settlers in the Wabash Valley for the thirty years prior to 1860, tells how the Lafayette, Indiana, society came and went, how one organization followed another, until at last this intellectual flame, choked by the onrush of industry, sputtered and died. An early debating society held its meetings at the courthouse. An institution bearing the curious title of Mr. Town's Grammar School succeeded this society, "and at its close the Tippecanoe County Lyceum was inaugurated, which was largely attended by the literati, male and female, of the village and surrounding country, and was a pleasant and profitable institution for several years. But pork, grain and beef, and commerce generally, got the upper hand of literature, and the Lyceum, which had many members and honorary members, possessing the finest order of talents, who have since filled high and honorable stations in the various departments of life, was suffered to languish and expire. The Lyceum was succeeded by the 'Hard Knot,' a literary association composed of the most ardent and devoted members of the former societies, who were determined that a Philomathean spirit should not entirely die out in our town. * * * This little society worked as a leaven, preparing the community for the Franklin Club, which flourished several years. * * * In a few years the majority of the members of this popular society relapsed into their former commercial habits, and grain, pork, canals, railroads, and banks and banking were the all-absorbing topics. Only a few real mourners followed the corpse of this society to its grave."



LIBRARY, RUSHVILLE



THE SCRIPPS COMMUNITY HOUSE, RUSHVILLE

Miss Ellen B. Scripps, of newspaper fame, gave this building, the Scripps home farm •
and an endowment fund for the use of the people

A society that illustrates, among many other things, this flickering come-and-go character of the usual debating society was the Rock Creek Society. The Rock Creek community is some six miles from New Salem and this society may have been one of those Abraham Lincoln occasionally dropped in upon when he was "walking six miles to debating clubs and calling the exercise 'practicing polemics.'" Thomas Nance transplanted the society from Kentucky in 1834. It had been a picayune affair, a school exercise in a little class tutored by Professor McElroy of Transylvania University that met in the home of Nathaniel Owens. In Kentucky the society had been a branch of the Whig Society of Transylvania University and bore the astounding appellation of the Philo Polemic and Literary Society. After it had been brought to Illinois, the name was clipped and changed to that of Tyro Polemic Society. In 1837, this humble effort was succeeded by the Rock Creek Lyceum. In high flown periods, with the literary verbosity that characterizes all debating society literature, the purpose of the society is stated in the preamble to the constitution. "Whereas, Believing that the present moment offers advantages, that if not taken hold of, we may, through negligence, have serious reason to deplore the loss of an opportunity that will never return, and Whereas, we are fast becoming our own private and public and political agents, and holding in view the immutability of the truth contained in the celebrated maxim, 'Knowledge is power and information capital,' and furthermore, we have been idle spectators to the advancement of other neighborhood towns, the acme of distinction, while we have been neglectful of our duty; therefore be it known that we hereby determine not to let these moments slip by half unimproved and neglected, and that as responsible agents and social beings, we will do all in our power to promote the great and good causes of Light and Liberty, wherefore we mutually agree to become members of a society for that purpose, and enact such laws, rules, and regulations as we shall, in the purest intention, deem wholesome and auxiliary to the cause of mental advancement." With such a splurge, the Rock Creek society came into being. It was refounded again in 1874. Carl Johann, afterwards president of Eureka College, taught the little Rock Creek School in that year. He was the son of a Swiss watchmaker, and was educated in Germany and at the Sorbonne. When he resolved to try his fortune in the new world, his father gave him twelve Swiss watches and then disinherited him. He arrived in Chicago on the eve of the Chicago fire and all his belongings, including the watches, were burned. Then he worked on a section gang, roofed houses, and finally landed in Rock Creek as a farm hand. Somebody found he was good for something better than that and made him

teacher of the country school. His literary Club was modeled after the Burke-Pericles Society at Eureka College, a society that had been founded in 1850 when Eureka College was still Walnut Grove Seminary. Like this society, the Rock Creek Club was divided into four sections, A, B, C, and D. Its aim was "culture" and during the first months of its existence its young members attracted little community interest. The first debate to draw a crowd was on the question, "Resolved, that a girl is justified in using any means to make herself physically attractive to a prospective suitor." Johann went to Eureka College and the society petered out in 1879.

All frontier debating societies were not pure and simple debating societies. They incorporated in the society a hodgepodge of other diverse activities. In 1894, at Pleasant Green, twelve miles northwest of Monmouth in Warren County, a shoddy, old, abandoned Presbyterian Church was remodeled solely for the purpose of housing a debating society. There was an admission price of five cents and usually from 250 to 350 attended. There was a program committee and half the society took part each Friday evening. Here, while debate was the major sport it was by no means the only sport. There were frequent recitations, dialogues, often full evening plays, and always musical numbers.

A neighbor to this society was the Hale Township Literary Society which met at what was called the Farmers' Academy and which was, in reality, nothing more than the country schoolhouse. As one skims through the meticulously penned minute book of this society he is amazed at the range of things the society undertook. They had a Christmas tree and a Christmas dinner. They sent five dollars to the "sufferers in Nebraska." On January 8, 1895, a motion was made "to buy a new hanging lamp for the schoolhouse." On November 26, of the same year, a motion was made "that the society hire a piano for the coming year and that bids for the janitor work be handed in at the next meeting, and that the society have the power to choose whom they see to be the best qualified to do the work, whether it be the lowest bid or not." At every meeting were musical numbers, declamations and at several meetings dialogues, at one "a dialogue by five of our young ladies was pronounced 'Fine'." There were also essays on "The Military History of the Civil War" and the debates upon the upholding of the Monroe Doctrine.

At Benedict's Store in Cornwall township of Henry County there existed a sort of community center. Here was a band, a ball team, and a debating society. In all three were the same participants, each had the same organization. And the debating society suffered not at all from such curious bed fellows. For Mr. George Funk of Cambridge remembers distinctly frequent and eloquent squabbles, most of them over the issues of slavery.

PLAN OF ORGANIZATION

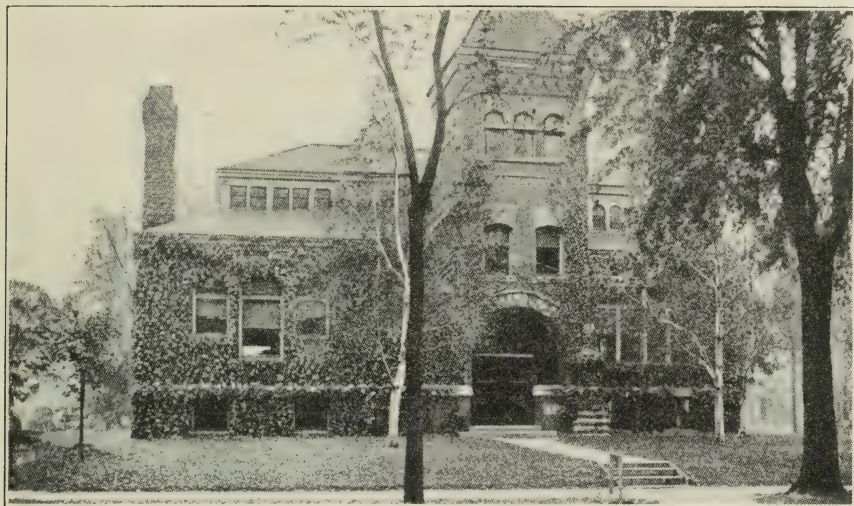
The organization of a lyceum debating society was as prim, meticulous, and legalistic as the charter for a bank. I have already quoted the preamble to the Rock Creek Lyceum Constitution. That of the Hale Township, Warren County, Society, which has also been mentioned will equal it for flighty circumlocution as well as for confused grammar: "Growth and development of the mind together with readiness and fluency of speech, being the result of investigation and practice and the discussion of all questions that may properly come before the society. This being our object, we do hereby adapt as our fundamental law the following constitution."

The organization of all the societies was not identical. There were always presidents, vice presidents, secretaries, and treasurers. At Hale township, they also had a second vice president and an assistant secretary. They not only had an ample number of offices but they reelected officers every four weeks, so that everyone in the society must have had, at one time or other, the privilege of being "it." At the early Rock Creek Society there was also an "anonymous reader." He opened the mail and "on finding any obscene documents," the constitution declared, he was to burn them "without further ceremony." There were also sergeants-at-arms or marshals. It was probably necessary. The Rock Creek Society constitution gave the president power "to fine disorderly members not less than one candle nor more than six" and at one meeting, the minutes record, "the meeting being interrupted by a set of ruffians, the house dismissed without a verdict nor in proper order." While nearly every constitution had specifications like that of the Hale Township Society, that "all members shall be of good moral character" and that "no rough, obscene, drunken, or otherwise disorderly man or woman shall be allowed an entrance into the assembly room of this society," the early debating society was by no means the plaything solely of the community intellectuals. Those frontiersmen which Herndon in his "Life of Lincoln" describes as typical, who would "shave a horse's mane and tail, disfigure it, and offer it for sale to the owner * * * hoop up in a hogshead a drunken man, they themselves being drunk, put in and nail fast the head, and roll the man down a hill a hundred feet or more * * * run down a lean and hungry wild pig, catch it, heat a ten-stove furnace hot, and, putting in the pig, cook it, they dancing the while a merry jig" were not only lurking about ready to bounce in and break up a meeting, but often, with all the vigor and gusto of their nature, they took an active part. The *Keithsburg Observer* for December 11, 1850, encourages an inchoate Literary Society because it would furnish an interest to the many boat hands of the Mississippi, "unsettled in the world, only waiting till navi-

gation opens again in the spring, when they are off for other climes." Rev. John Atcheson of Princeton, Illinois, has told me in an interview how the Pleasant Green Society in Warren County settled the problem of rowdyism. The organizers had had experience. There was danger of meetings being broken up by some "river rats" down on the flats—but far more danger from some lusty young bucks of the local community. The latter were appointed sergeants-at-arms. And it worked magnificently. Some visitors from the flats did straggle in one evening, talked out loud in meeting, and when the president of the society protested offered to settle with him outside. He went out with them; a zealous coterie of sergeants-at-arms followed. * * * There were never any other disturbances.

John Du Bois of Liverpool, Illinois, who has had experience in a great many societies in eastern Fulton County, outlined the pattern that was usually followed in carrying on debates. Besides the four officers, there was a committee of three on questions. This committee selected the two leaders at each meeting and divided up the speakers. The two leaders each chose a judge and these judges chose a third judge. A critic was also appointed who spoke at the end of the debate. The debaters spoke in the order selected, the two leaders alone had rebuttal, and the Affirmative both began and closed.

The scheme had all kinds of variations. At Pocahontas, Illinois, the two leaders were called "polemics" and chose up sides. Here no man spoke more than ten minutes. A similar scheme was followed at the Sawbuck School in Fulton County. But here the two "polemics" were permanent—two old forensic war horses, a school teacher and a lawyer, who founded the society and for whom the society existed. The judge was also permanent. He appointed two other judges for each debate. Everyone spoke; there was a fine of ten cents if one didn't; ten to fifteen speakers spoke on each side and no one was permitted to talk more than fifteen minutes. Mr. H. C. Bradsby describes this same system: "The older men would be appointed, and then they would choose one at a time alternately until everyone present would be elected debater, and they would speak in the order chosen; the head leaders would be the real lions of the evening, and as it tapered off in succession toward the tail of the intellectual whip the speeches would be correspondingly shortened about in the ratio that the embarrassment increased." At the Munson School in Henry County which had practically the same membership and met on alternative Friday nights with a society in Cornwall township the judges sat at the teachers' desk and the debaters faced the front of the room. This may have been true at the Rock Creek Society also, for the constitution contains the item: "No person shall pass between the jury and the speaker without



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a reprimand from the president." At Munson, there was an open forum after the debate. At Oquawka, Illinois, the audience voted after the judges had given their decision. Usually they didn't agree. The *Oquawka Spectator* for January 8, 1858, recounts a debate upon the question, "Resolved that the Statesman is a greater public benefactor than the soldier." "The Board decided the weight of argument to rest with those who advocated the cause of the statesman, but the audience, on the merits of the question, decided in favor of the sword." A week later the question was: "Resolved, that the United States should extend her boundaries." "Upon the question being submitted to the audience there was a general uprising in favor of extension of our boundaries, there being only four or five in favor of no more territory." Both are interesting slants upon public opinion of the period.

It is dangerous to generalize too freely upon an institution that had as broad a range both chronologically and geographically as did the debating society of the early Middle West. One does observe from the above accounts, however, a certain conformity, a debating society tradition that spread with the movement. It is rather curious that societies miles and years apart should be conducted on practically the same plan. In all societies, there were the same legalistic, rigid constitutions, the same turgid and verbose oratory, the same formal, court-like ritual. The *Keithsburg Observer* for November 27, 1850, with the typical journalistic style of the mid-century, chronicles in these glowing terms the first meeting of that winter: "The debate exceeded all expectations. The inaugural address of the president, Mr. Adams, was really highly interesting, a happy effort on his part, reflecting credit not only upon himself, but upon the institution over which he presides. * * * The debate, we are glad to say, was ably conducted, with utmost regard to good order and decorum, upon strictly parliamentary rules." That shows, perhaps, how seriously the debating society of that time was taken.

Kenable, in speaking of the usefulness of the debating society and the scope of the subjects debated, says "The ability to think to a point, to hold arguments in mind, to weigh evidence and form a just opinion was cultivated and men learned by such mental practice to perform their public duties as electors, jurors, trustees, and presiding officers. The efforts of a boy to stand in a country schoolhouse and say, 'Mr. President, I think that pursuit is better than possession' or 'I believe the pulpit affords a wider field of usefulness than the bar,' or who ventured to prove that state sovereignty is preferable to centralization, or that the government should abolish the national bank, or that Hannibal was greater than Scipio, put his whole mind and body to a test."

If we were to prepare a still lengthier catalogue of all the questions debated upon that we could get together we should find any satisfactory

generalization impossible. We should conclude that there was absolutely no limit to the kind of question those nineteenth century debaters were willing to tackle. Certainly, there must have been no society that did not ponder the question as to which afforded the greater pleasure, pursuit or possession. Here was a universal quandary. And they debated it the century through. Why it was such an enthralling enigma at that day one cannot say. I doubt if a person could greatly excite himself in an argument on that topic today. What that topic and the many topics like it show is that what was debated didn't greatly matter; the thing that did matter was that they liked to debate. Mere questions were secondary.

Sometimes a genuine curiosity inspired them. When a Keithsburg, Illinois, Lyceum debated "Resolved, that the soil as well as the air and sunshine should be the common property of all mankind" there was probably behind it a nascent puzzling as to the wisdom of communism. And when there took place those frequent debates as to which was the greatest evil (the *Rock Creek Journal* contains three items like this: "Mr. Houghton takes Laziness; Mr. Ray, Lying; Mr. Bagby, the Immoderate Love of Gain; Mr. Secretary, Ignorance; Mr. President, Conscious Neglect of Duty; Mr. Goldsby, Slavery; and Mr. Wynn, Pride. Ignorance gained"), or those other casuistic, doctrinaire debates upon such questions as "Has a person a right to take life in self defense?" the debaters may have been honestly curious to find the truth. Again, when national integrity or well-being was at stake as in questions: "Resolved, that the discovery of gold in California has proved more of a curse than a blessing to this country;" "Resolved, that the negro has been more abused by the white man than the Indian;" "Resolved, that the conduct of our forefathers in the settlement of North America toward the natives was justifiable;" "Resolved, that the Mexican war was justifiable," there can be no doubt but that there was an interest in the question in itself. But when an evening was spent debating "Resolved, that the horse is a more useful animal than the cow" then, certainly, the question was made for the debate, not the debate for the question.

However, the lyceum debating society did not limit itself to these academic novelties, questions of theory or philosophy. The great national issues had their reverberations in these Friday night discussions. All phases of the public lands question were discussed: Will the act passed by Congress prohibiting the settlement of the public lands until surveyed be beneficial to the pioneers of the West? Should the price of public lands be reduced? Would it be politic in the general government to continue the present system of disposing of public lands or give the remaining lands to the states in which they lay? They debated the tariff, and at one debate at Rock Creek, Isaac Cogdal, the same Isaac Cogdal who had

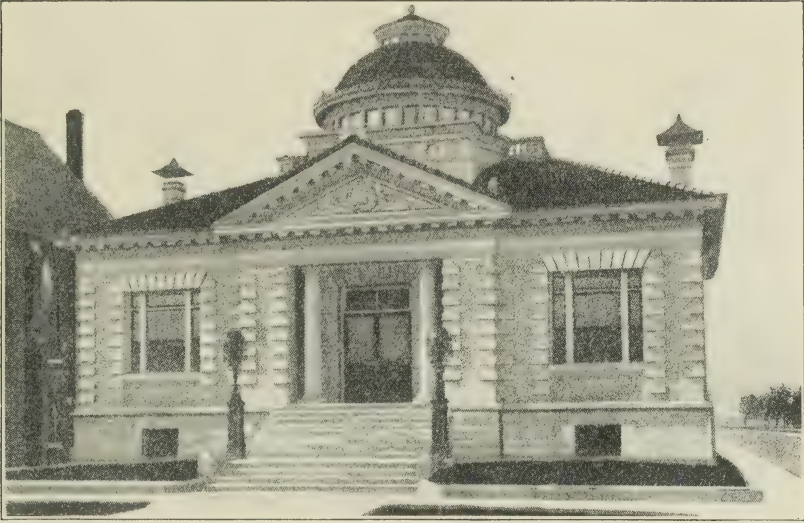
argued for pantheism in a debate on "Which is the greatest evil infesting the human race?" displayed with much elan the lining of his coat tail, to prove that men's suits would be far more expensive if coat-tail linings could not be imported from England. They debated the currency question: "Resolved, that paper currency is injurious to the best interests of the community," and governmental theory, "Resolved, that the government of the United States should be supported by direct taxation." "Resolved, that the veto should be abolished." "Resolved, that capital punishment should be abolished." "Resolved, that a monarchy is a better form of government than a republic." "Resolved, that the pioneers of the West are entitled to a pension." "Which would have been more honorable in the United States, to forgive the French indemnity or to compel them to pay it by force of arms?" A question that makes one gasp, to think that it could be debated in 1826 in Rutland County, Vermont, is the one that Horace Greeley offered, "Is the Union likely to be perpetuated?"

They debated slavery in all phases, from the theoretical side, "Which is the greater evil, War or Slavery?"—or "Polygamy or Slavery?" "Resolved that slavery is a national evil." "Supposing a law be passed freeing the negroes, which would be most politic in the United States, to educate them and make them equal citizens with us, or colonize them in another land and hold them as allies?" To the current political side: "Resolved, that the repeal of the Missouri Compromise is a menace to the perpetuity of the national Union." "Resolved, that local sovereignty on the question of slavery is politic," or "Resolved, that the Fugitive Slave Law is just and right and should be enforced." The *Keithsburg Observer* for three issues beginning with December 11, 1850, tells a story that shows the furious interest in this question: "On Thursday evening last, in the midst of a discussion of the fugitive slave question, a challenge was given by Mr. Dudley to any one present to meet him, single-handed, in a public discussion of this important question, which was promptly accepted by our worthy townsman, J. C. Pepper, Esq. Preliminaries were immediately arranged." * * * "The debate came off * * * minus; Mr. Dudley Whillits, from unavoidable circumstances, no doubt, not appearing. John S. Thompson, Esq., was loudly called for * * * which call was responded to in a most able, impressive, and argumentative manner." * * * "That debate: The time appointed again for public discussion of the Fugitive Slave Law is on Tuesday evening next. We hope our citizens will not meet in another disappointment." * * * "February 12, 1851. The debate on the Fugitive slave law came off." The *Oquawka Spectator* for the same date records a mass meeting against the Fugitive Slave Law at which took place a debate and after which resolutions were drawn up. And a week later it prints this item: "We

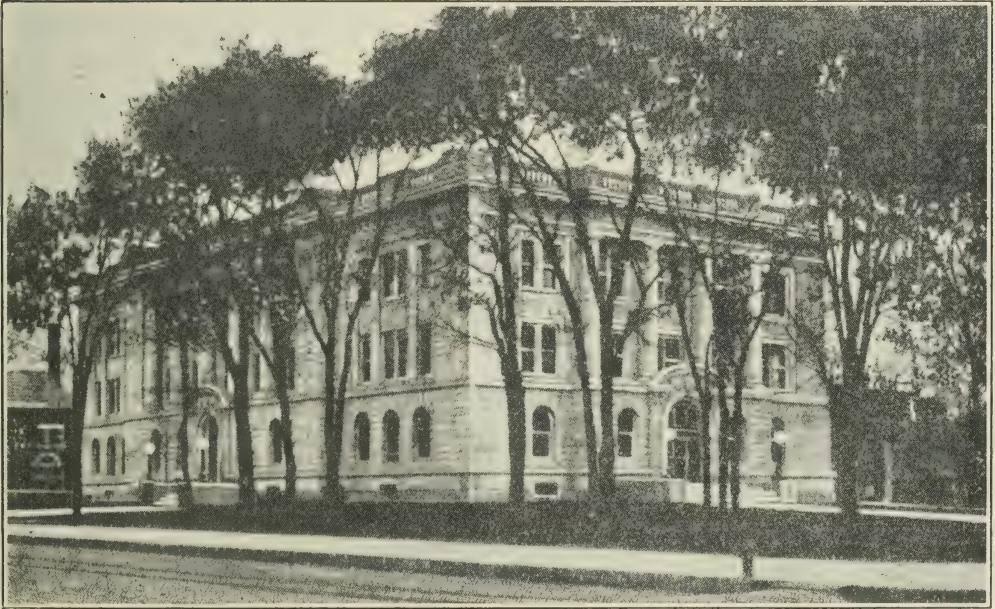
understand that there was quite an animated discussion on the subject of the fugitive slave law on Thursday last at Hutchinson's Grove, in this county. J. C. Hutchinson esq., and Col. Creswell were in favor of the law and E. A. Panie and David Tumball against it. The meeting adjourned to meet at the house of Mr. John W. Wood yesterday."

They debated local political issues. Rock Creek debated several times "Would it be good policy in the people of the state of Illinois to call a convention for the purpose of amending the present constitution of the state?" and again "Would it be policy in Illinois to go on and borrow money to complete the Northern Canal, or let it out to a company under certain restrictions?" and "Would it be policy in our Legislature to divide Sangamon County in any way." Much later, the same society debated the question, "Resolved, that agriculture should be taught in the schools of Sangamon County."

If one had been a prophet, he might have foreseen in some of these questions the great national issues of a later day. One was women's suffrage. The women didn't always debate. At the Munson School in Henry County the rule was "Men debate, women attend." The *Keithsburg Observer* of 1850 constantly invited the ladies to attend: "We suppose the public—ladies and all—are desired to attend" and on January 22, 1851, thanks the ladies for "their presence and countenance." But no hint is given that they were to be heard as well as seen. On December 4, 1850, The Keithsburg Lyceum held a debate on the question, "Resolved, that females should have equal rights, political as well as religious, with the male." Although the Seneca, New York, Women's Rights Convention, where was drafted a Declaration of Independence for Women, was held in 1848, and numerous similar conventions were immediately held throughout the country, one as far west as Dublin, Indiana, the wave had evidently not hit Keithsburg for the *Keithsburg Observer* writes: "The debate was less entertaining than could have been desired * * * simply from the fact that the question for discussion—women's suffrage—was not such as to elicit any great degree of interest. * * * None, but those who were compelled, were willing to participate." In the fall of 1878, the same question was debated at the Benedict Store Debating Club in Cornwall township of Henry County. By this time, at least in this society, the ladies did participate. Mrs. William Colby was a fervid champion of women's rights. However, she was also the mother of a young son. That she might enter the arena unencumbered, Mr. Colby passively remained at home to take care of the youngster. In the midst of the evening, however, perhaps seized with a hunch that the masculine banners were being smirched, he bundled up the baby with all of its trappings of blankets, and with a great deal of bustle and disturbance, paraded conspicuously into the schoolhouse. Since he couldn't debate with a baby in his arms,



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TAZEWELL COUNTY COURTHOUSE, PEKIN

he handed it to one of the judges who sat on the platform and who held it clumsily until Mrs. Colby sent up a boy to retrieve her forsaken offspring. The negative won.

Another issue that cast its shadow before it was prohibition. They debated it at New Salem, Illinois, in the 1830s. At Pocahontas, Illinois, one of the questions in the decade after 1850 was "Resolved, that the sale of alcoholic beverages should be prohibited." In Cornwall township of Henry County during the winter of 1856, they spent three evenings debating "Resolved, that the license system should be abolished."

The questions ran the scale of interests. One of the earliest societies, the Political Club of Danville, Kentucky, which met on Saturday nights from 1786 to 1790, debated only financial, judicial, or political questions. The Pleasant Green Society of Warren County, Illinois, in 1894 avoided all political questions. However, the average society debated all sorts of things that held for their members a vestige of interest.

It is a pity we have so few remnants of that early debating society oratory. It was doubtless exceedingly crude and bumptious. The rather spurious though characteristic examples which H. C. Bradsby gives in his *History of Bureau County* seem to indicate that: "Where was Henry Clay? At the head of an army with a big gun killing Indians; that's where he was. And what would become of all this country if it had not been for James Francis Marion, as he sat eating sweet potatoes on a holler log when the king of England called to see him before breakfast and he wanted something to wash the cobwebs out of his throat. No sir; think of the people of this country being scalped, killed and being carried into captivity by the Indians. Was not all these things worth fighting for. No sir, Tippeconnoe and Tyler, too, and I say forever." And this from a speech on Art and Nature. "Mr. President, I say Nature is most beautifuller. What Mr. President is beautifuller than to see a natural steamboat flyin' and puffin' up a natural river or a natural canal, when the houses rock and bob like natural corks when you are getting a big bite from a little sun fish."

The *Oquawka Spectator* for February 6, 1855, contains an alleged speech on the same subject: "The roaring of thunder was heard far and wide and reminded those who heard it of the clattering of hoofs of so many wild horses crossing a bridge over a creek where the little fishes were seen skipping about from puddle to puddle! The lightening flashed and flashed! Every now and then the whole heavens looked as though it was lighted up with tallow candles and then all snuffed."

Of course these examples are not genuine, nor even typical. The only truth to be shown by them is how extremely earthy and of the people the middle western debating club was. And they show that passion with which the frontier community was imbued for dramatic, declamatory

bombastic oratory, "sesquipedalia verba," and glittering figures of speech. Fearon, in his travels in America, makes this observation of American oratory, particularly of the frontier. He writes: "It is chiefly distinguished by a set, logical arrangement with regard to matter, but expressed in inflated language * * * strong expressions are used to express minor ideas; words of six syllables are substituted for deep thought or sound argument, and there is evidently a constant labor after allusions and simile which are often threadbare and broken." And then follows this paradox: "The manner of their speeches is generally marked by an equal absence of modest diffidence and manly boldness." Drake in his Discourse in 1834 on the History, Character, and Prospects of the West apologizes for frontier oratory in this manner: "The literature of a young and free people will of course be declamatory. Deeper learning will, no doubt, abate its verbosity and intumescence * * * Ought not the literature of a free people to be declamatory? Whenever the literature of a new country loses its metaphonical and declamatory character, the institutions which depend upon public sentiment will languish and decline. For a long time, the oration in various forms will constitute a large portion of our literature. Any people who have fresh and lively feelings will always relish oratory."

A. F. Murphy, an old settler of Fulton County, remembers a great deal of the debating society speeches he heard and gave. He was a member of a society which debated at the Brandon School in Cornwall township of Henry County between 1855 and 1860. The organizing genius of the society and its chief enthusiast from beginning to end was J. B. Peterson. He was fresh from the academy at Cuba in Fulton County, and had there been introduced to debating and debating clubs. With small head, receding forehead, quick-witted and quick-tempered, this cantankerous son of the frontier boasted that he would allow anyone to select a subject and choose either side of it, and he would debate with him without hesitation. He was a gasconading, ready, and emphatic speaker, so violent in his gesticulation that, quite ordinarily he would suffer from rheumatism and sore muscles the day after. On one occasion, legend has it, his palate fell; the debate was resumed after they had secured the services of a horse-doctor. He stood in front of the teacher's desk where the judges sat, and punctuated his oratory with frequent brisk taps on the desk.

Founded in 1855, of course they debated the question of slavery. At one time, this was the question: "Resolved, that Slavery is a national evil." To this debate, Cornwall's society sent to the country Baptist Church of Burns township as challengers, J. B. Peterson and my grandfather. They were the Affirmative. The Negative consisted of Judge Matthew B. Potter of the County Court and Squire Ira Parker, a local justice of the peace.

For these young tyros, it was absurd competition. However, they had Blake's History of Slavery at their tongues' ends and had primed their guns for big game. J. B. Peterson opened the debate with a speech of "great power." The battle was won. The poor slave was pictured graphically, "cringing desperately at the feet of his master." Then Judge Potter arose and said rather slowly: "I agree with every statement the young man has made. Slavery is an evil and a great evil. But it is not a *national* evil. It affects only the states where it exists." And then, for the first time, those two opinionated young-bloods woke up to just exactly what it was they were debating. They revived slowly, but after twenty minutes of Judge Potter's speaking, they were ready to continue: "One black sheep spoils the flock. The crime of an erring sister is felt by the whole family. A carbuncle on even a remote member of the body poisons and sickens the whole. A cancer poisons the blood and sends its virus through the whole circulatory system. The virus of slavery has already poisoned every artery of the Nation's life and is now gnawing at its vitals." And so on ad infinitum. But for the final speech, the peroration, no one could quite equal the erstwhile J. B. Peterson: "I am surprised at the rot we have listened to this evening. Such sentiments are only held by old, grey-headed seers. Young men know better. Thank God we'll soon be rid of them!" Then there was an awful silence, a long, long pause. Judge Potter seemed just a little stunned by this execrating tirade. Then, again, he slowly arose, scratched his head and asked quizzically: "Do you know what King David told some young men in Second Samuel X:5?" They didn't. "Well," he said, "I will tell you. He told them to tarry at Jericho until their beards were grown." The undaunted Peterson rose to retort but the crowd stamped their feet and hissed him down and it is understood that two young debaters returned to Cornwall wiser than when they left.

The comparative beauties of Art and Nature also worried the Cornwall debaters. One night, a Mr. Comstock, a teacher from Munson township, ardent champion of Nature, had spoken with simplicity and force upon the beauty of the human mind. Mr. George Fergeson of Cornwall, stentorian proponent of Art, rose to reply: "Gentlemen of the Jury, Our question is Resolved, that the art of man is more contracting to the human eye than the art of nature. Mr. Comstock speaks of the human brain as being contracting to the eye. * * * Did he ever see it? Why doesn't he bore a hole in his head? Might a little wind puff out but you wouldn't see anything. Now wouldn't that be contracting?"

Crude debating certainly. But what is more important is that it made those debaters less crude. For it set going within them a kind of curiosity, a desire to know the truth, a longing to grow mentally out of the ugly coarseness of their frontier lives into something better, and in so doing

it started that something which finally civilized this middle country wilderness.

There is no more convincing testimonial of the titanic influence that the debating society exercised as an educational force on the frontier, awakening ambitions and sharpening wits, than is to be found in the biographies of American statesmen. Like a college boasting of its prominent alumni, the debating society cannot be permitted to vaunt itself unseemly and claim all the credit for making these men what they were. To be sure, this was only one of the educational influences brought to bear on these lives. In some cases it was incidental; in others—the following paragraphs will prove it—it was crucial. For, when educational opportunities existed only in dwarfish little country schools, often manned by ill-trained pedagogues, and taught only in inadequate three-month winter terms, or in scattered academies or distant colleges, this many times was the single agent to plant the germ of ambition, to furnish a rich soil for intellectual growth.

We have already mentioned the case of Andrew Johnson, walking four miles every Friday evening the winter long to debate with a Greenville College society. One of the debaters who was also enrolled in the college writes that he remembers "Johnson's fascinating manners, his natural talent for oratory, his capacity to draw all the students around him and make all of them warm friends."

Thirty years before, in 1797, at Lexington, Kentucky, a tall, handsome, open faced youth named Henry Clay, soon after his arrival in Lexington, before he had begun to practice law, joined a debating club. This club, too, was an appendage of the university, but entirely independent and rather monopolized by outsiders. Curiously enough, there was a high entrance fee. One evening, when, after a long discussion, the vote upon the question before the house was about to be taken, Clay whispered to a friend, loudly enough to be overheard, that to him the debate did not seem to have exhausted the subject. Someone remarked that Mr. Clay desired to speak and he was called upon. Carl Schurz, as does Prentiss, relates the incident in detail: "Finding himself unexpectedly confronting the audience, he was struck with embarrassment and, as he had done frequently in imaginary appeals in court, he began: 'Gentlemen of the Jury.' A titter running through the audience increased his confusion and the awkward words came out once more. But then he gathered himself up; his nerves became steady and he poured out a flow of reasoning so lucid and at the same time so impassioned that his hearers were overcome with astonishment. * * * The speech stamped him at once as a remarkable man in the community and laid open before him the road to success."

Gustave Koerner belonged to the same society, much later in 1833, when he, too, was studying law at Lexington. One night, the subject

debated was "Resolved, that the party spirit is beneficial." In a particularly facetious mood, Koerner made a rollicking attempt to travesty frontier oratory, with its stupid verbosity and resounding periods. His attempt worked too well. He was greeted with a storm of applause. Lexington thought it real eloquence!

At the time that Clay was winning his first laurels as a speaker down at Lexington, Kentucky, Kenable writes that Thomas Ewing at Athens, Ohio, and Tom Corwin at Lebanon, Ohio, by a similar experience, were developing their powers of expression in the debating club. At Covington, Indiana, was a debating society with a most distinguished alumni body. Levining in his book, "Historic Indiana," in one chapter entitled "A Typical Indianian" chronicles the life of Albert Henderson, who belonged to the society at Covington and found the society extremely valuable in giving him mental poise. Levining says, "In the village there was a brilliant coterie of young men, such men as Edward Hannegan, Judge Ristine, Daniel Voorhees, and Lew Wallace. * * * Mr. Henderson was associated with these men in a lyceum and literary club, formed with the object of sharpening their own wits, in tilts against each other, and for the purpose of bringing noted lecturers to the town for the benefit of the general public and to sustain a town library." Lew Wallace mentions this society. According to his account it was loosely connected to the Covington village seminary. He writes: "A literary society was a feature of the seminary course to which, on return from Centerville, I was subjected, and if I write with some particularity, it is because the society was more interesting and useful to me than the regular instruction of the school. Its membership was not exclusive. The master had nothing to do with it; he merely permitted the use of the school room for its sessions which were on Friday evenings. The exercises included debates, recitations, compositions, and criticisms. * * * We also studied parliamentary law with 'Jefferson's Manual' for a text-book, and practiced it in moot legislatures. The chairman arbitrarily assigned a duty to each of us, and if we failed in performance or absented ourselves without good excuse, we were fined. I cannot say the treasury was greatly enriched by the penal part of our code for the reason chiefly that we seldom had wherewith to pay our assessments. Such organizations are usually short of life; this one, however, endured and was faithfully attended through several years.

"It would be pleasant to give a list of the men who in that society made their first signs of talent * * * lawyers, politicians, journalists, useful men generally, some of national distinction. Among those still abroad in the land, * * * and even yet they are not a few * * * there exists a comradeship not unlike that obtaining with old soldiers; and when they chance to meet, they grow reminiscent and tell of the haps and mishaps which took place in the old literary club."

Later in 1879 and 1880, when the movement had spread westward to the corn country of Mitchell County, Iowa, that great chronicler of the early middle country, Hamlin Garland, belonged to a debating club. "On Fridays during the winter months, we generally attended the lyceum which met in the Burr Oak schoolhouse. We often debated, and on one occasion I attained the honor of being called upon to preside over the session."

The diversity of the types of men who had debating society experience is astonishing. At Terre Haute, Indiana, young Eugene Debs came to a "purple moment of his life, when he was elected president of the Occidental Literary Club. This was an organization of youngsters bitten with the cultural bug then swarming throughout Indiana. It gave 'Gene' and other young, local orators the chance for a sounding board. There was no subject under the American sun which the Occidental Literary Club was not prepared to debate."

William Jennings Bryan belonged to a literary society at Salem, Illinois. Writing in his memoirs of some of his first literary society debates, Bryan said: "I do not remember the subjects debated, but I recall that in one debate in which the color question came up, I used a sentence which brought forth applause when in the course of a brief speech I described something under consideration as 'the darkest picture ever painted upon the canvas of Time!'" Bryan never recovered from an inevitable flare to elicit applause by just such oratorical flights. "You shall not crucify labor upon a cross of gold!" The same William Jennings Bryan!

After Bryan had enrolled at Illinois College, he joined the Sigma Pi Debating Society. In fact, he had been a member of the society while still in the Academy of Illinois College, Whipple Academy. The secretary records that at one meeting of Sigma Pi, he moved all to tears. This also is found in the minutes of the Society: "Bryan, in the course of the debate brought down the house by saying: 'The President of the College is for free trade, our ex-president is for free trade, and I myself am for free trade!'"

Champ Clark organized debating societies around 1865 at Lawrenceville, and Camden, Kentucky. He writes: "While teaching schools, I organized debating societies of the grown-up boys and such of the patrons as I could induce to participate. We debated such thrilling and important questions as: 'Resolved, that there is more pleasure in pursuit than possession.' 'Which is the more useful animal, the horse or the cow?' 'Which is the mightier, the pen or the sword?' 'Which is more useful, water or fire?' Occasionally we tackled the really important problem, 'Should capital punishment be abolished?' It was dull, crude debating, but to me, perhaps to others, it was useful, because in that way I learned to think and talk at the same time on my feet."

Another speaker of the House, Joseph Cannon, writes in a like vein: "The debating society was another institution we had in pioneer days that has been permitted to fall into disuse except in the colleges. Whatever success I have had in legislative life and in defending legislation on the floor, I owe largely to the debating society we had in the Quaker settlement on the Wabash. * * * Some years ago Representative Landis had an old Hoosier constituent visit him and took him to the gallery of the House. Mr. Landis' friend asked him who it was speaking and when he replied, 'Mr. Cannon,' his friend said, 'I was sure I knew him. I have not met Mr. Cannon since he was elected to Congress many years ago, but I was a member of the same debating society down on the Wabash, and he has the same manner of debating now, he had then.'"

The country debating society was one of the influences which made ready the ground for the Lincoln-Douglas debates. The seven platforms where Honest Abe and the Little Giant fought the issues of free soil and state or national sovereignty, were the arenas of the nation. Obviously, political combats are not fought in that manner today; candidates for office do not go on debating peregrinations through the state like the old circuit riders. The Lincoln-Douglas debates might not have taken place so naturally and so successfully had there not been built up a habit of debate, an interest in public debate, and a love of oratorical combat. It is here that the country debating society played its modest role.

Whatever influence the debating society exerted on the audiences of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, we do know very definitely the influence it wrought on the two speakers. They both received some schooling in the country debating club. "The first promise Stephen A. Douglas gave of becoming an orator," writes his sister, Mrs. Sarah A. Granger, "was when eleven years old (1824) at a Vermont country-side debate, when he answered a man who was past fifty and used him up at every point, too."

A debating society was organized at New Salem during the winter of 1832. James Rutledge was president and Dr. Allen and Rev. John Berry were members, as well as most of the educated and accomplished people of the town, and the folks who wished to "advance" themselves. Abraham Lincoln belonged to this society and perhaps to some others, for Ida Tarbell says that Lincoln walked seven or eight miles to debating clubs and called the exercise "practicing polemics." We do not know what they debated in the New Salem society that winter, except that Mrs. A. G. Nance of Petersburg has a carefully preserved speech that her father-in-law gave before this society when they were debating the question of prohibition, and Attorney Thomas Reep of Petersburg remembers hearing Johnny Watkins, an old-timer of that day, tell of rambling through the village of New Salem on a winter evening, spying a gleam of light coming through the schoolhouse window. They were debating the relative joys

of pursuit and possession. Lincoln spoke for pursuit. Johnny Watkins went away thoroughly convinced that to that question there was but one side and that Abe Lincoln's side. There is still preserved the account of Lincoln's first speech before this society. Carl Sandberg writes about it: "* * * there was close attention. For they all knew this was a joker, the husky who brought the lizard story to their town, the lusty buck who grappled Jack Armstrong and slammed him for a fall, the pleasant spinner of yarns. He opened his address in a tone of apology, as though he had been thinking over what he was going to say, but he wasn't sure he could put on the end of his tongue the ideas operating in his head. He went on with facts, traced back and picked up essential facts, and wove them into an argument, apologized again and said he hoped the argument would stand on its own legs and command respect." The story is also told by Robert R. Rutledge, the son of the president of the society: "As he arose to speak, his tall form towered above the little assembly. Both hands were thrust deep down into the pockets of his pantaloons. A perceptible smile at once lit up the faces of the audience, for all anticipated the relation of some humorous story but he opened the discussion in splendid style to the infinite astonishment of his friends. As he warmed to his subject, his hands would forsake his pockets and would enforce his ideas by awkward gestures, but would very soon seek their resting place. * * *

The president of the society at his fireside after the meeting remarked to his wife that there was more than wit and fun in Abe's head; that he was already a fine speaker, that all he lacked was culture to enable him to reach the high destiny that he knew was in store for him."

It was no simple coincidence that, but a few weeks after this incident, James Rutledge and some other of Lincoln's friends, urged him to announce himself a candidate for the Legislature. This incident, so small that a score of careful Lincoln biographers, all of whom draw a vivid and detailed sketch of the wrestling match with Jack Armstrong, do not mention it, was, nevertheless, crucial in stirring within Lincoln the desire to serve his community in the Legislature, his first entrance into the political arena.

And so, from the creator of "Ben Hur" to that of "Four score and seven years ago" we run the gamut of some of the men who knew and profited from the country debating society. And from their biographies alone, we may learn something of this institution which, from Vermont to Iowa, touched the lives of these many types of men, authors, editors, labor leaders, and statesmen, and not only touched them but was vital in furnishing a part of their education.

In our times, the debating society would probably be of little service. In its day, it served well a crying need for a "parliament of the people."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE NEGRO IN THE VALLEY

Part One

ORIGINS

Even as early as 1720, slaves were found in the Northwest Territory. They were first introduced by Renault and were imported from the West Indies. Their work, after they arrived in this section of the country, seems to have been in the mines. Whether or not Renault actually extracted any lead or copper from the depths of the earth is not known for sure. At any rate, his attempts first served to give slavery a firm foothold in this territory.

The attitude of the white populace towards these black people was very different at first from what it was in the middle of the nineteenth century. They were believed to possess some wonderful power of the supernatural and were held in great awe, if not fear, by their masters. Strange tales of their witchcraft passed from one community to the next. One poor old woman, living on Silver Creek, was said to be able to draw milk from a cow without touching, yes, without even so much as seeing the animal. By 1790, superstition obtained complete control of the whites and several poor slaves were sacrificed at the shrine of ignorance. It was not at all uncommon to hear of shootings, hangings, and even burnings at the stake as forms of punishment.

In spite of all this, negro slaves soon became valuable. In fact, the negro soon became a medium of exchange and was accepted by the court in payment for debts. A record dated April 30, 1768, reads: "I certify that I have bought and received of Mr. Antone La Sourée, two oxen, two horses with a cart and gears, for which I have paid and delivered to him, one male negro and 115 livres on account."

The negro is frequently mentioned in other records of the early French settlement in Illinois. One man, in 1765, is said to have owned no less than eighty slaves. Even before this, the annals of 1751 state that a Mr. and Mrs. Bourbonnais sold a slave who could do only kitchen chores.

Not only did slaves add to the romance of those times, but they must have contributed to the economic system in the various communities. In

1771, Kaskaskia is reported to have had an almost equal number of blacks and whites—about 500 of each. Prairie du Rocher contained some eighty negroes to a hundred whites while Cahokia contained the smallest proportion of only about seventy-five negroes to some 300 whites. This, however, tells us nothing of the economic status of the French for many are said to have been abjectly poor, even though they were slave holders.

Even at this time, the right to hold slaves was not without restrictions. Although Louis XIII, in 1615, recognized slavery as an institution of Louisiana, of which Illinois became a part, and Louis XV, in 1724, re-enacted his edict, certain limitations were imposed. The civil law stated that if one of the parents was free, any children should follow the conditions of the mother. The separation of husband and wife, or parents and children was strictly forbidden.

When the Illinois country passed from control of France to England, the Treaty of Paris in 1763 confirmed the right of the French inhabitants to hold slaves. So, too, did the deed of cession from Britain to the United States imply such recognition by a stipulation that "the French and Canadian inhabitants, and other settlers of the Kaskaskias, St. Vincents, and the neighboring villages * * * shall have their possessions and titles confirmed to them, and be protected in the enjoyment of their rights and liberties." In 1784, Jefferson drafted a tentative bill for the governing of the new Northwest, which provided, among other things, that there should be no slavery in that portion of the country. However, in spite of Jefferson's tireless efforts it never went into effect.

The Ordinance of 1787 was decreed three years later, however, providing that: "there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in such territory, otherwise than in the punishment of crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted." Provision was also made for the reclamation of "persons from whom labor or service was lawfully claimed in any of the original states, who had escaped from their masters."

Slave owners everywhere wanted to do away with this restrictive ordinance which promised in time to overthrow their entire social and economic system. A court decision issued to one Mr. St. Clair assured the planters that this clause could not apply to slaves already in bondage before the ordinance was passed. This allowed a short breathing space in the struggle.

The fear of the French that they might lose their slaves and later the desire of Illinois to attract new settlers led to many efforts on the part of the slave-holders to re-legalize slavery. In 1796, four persons in Kaskaskia petitioned Congress for permission to hold slaves. Again in 1800, sixty-eight persons applied for the same privilege.

Two years later, such intense controversy had arisen in the West that Governor Harrison thought it wise to take action. Accordingly, a conven-

tion was called at Vincennes for the purpose of discussing the subject. There a transcript was prepared and sent to Congress, but with no results. In 1807 another remonstrance was filed. Later when a bill came before Congress for the extinction of slavery in the Northwest Territory it met with decisive defeat.

Needless to say, slaves continued to come to Illinois and Indiana. The greatest number were from Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia, although many also came from the Carolinas, Maryland and Louisiana. Much of the servile labor was employed in the saline mines. It was thought that slaves might help relieve the financial situation.

Southern Illinois was fairly well adapted to slavery. Its low latitude afforded just the right sort of climate and soil for crops adapted to slave labor. It was also in direct commercial contact with the South. In that part of the territory, slaves were both domestic servants and field hands. Slavery was not only tolerated but had legal recognition.

All people in Illinois were not upholders of the institution, however. William G. Tumsden moved from Kentucky to Morgan County in order to avoid being actively involved in slavery. Randolph County as a whole was opposed to the practice. Its population was heterogeneous, composed of Dutch, Germans, Yankees, Swiss, Irish, English, and Scotch people. Nearly every family had moved there to avoid slavery. An unknown settler in Vandalia told his neighbors that he had moved up from the Carolinas in order to become associated with a more affable society. The class distinctions prevalent everywhere in slave lands was distasteful to him.

The inevitableness of the spread of slavery is shown in Fordham's narrative. Although he says he would never be guilty of spreading slavery into free territories, if it should become an institution, he would doubtless use it. He also explains that, in slave states, free paid laborers cannot be had.

CHAPTER XVIII

Part Two

THE CONTEST OF 1824

Slavery was the most important issue in the first decade of statehood. As the gubernatorial election of 1822 came on it was evident that the next governor of Illinois would be chosen for his stand upon the slavery question. The total anti-slavery vote was 3,330, while the pro-slavery forces polled 5,303. The high anti-slavery candidate, however, won by a plurality, although the opposing faction had a large majority in both houses.

The new governor was Edward Coles, a Virginian who had been secretary to President Madison and Ambassador to Russia in 1817. He moved to Illinois in 1819 to free his slaves. To each head of a manumitted family he gave 160 acres of land. His first message to the Legislature recommended the freeing of the slaves and a general revision of the Black Laws. This started a long, drawn-out struggle to amend the Constitution.

On February 10, 1823, the vote for a Constitutional Convention stood twenty-three for and thirteen against in the House. Just one vote was needed to make the necessary two-thirds majority, Hansen, a representative from Pike County who had stood with the slavery party, having bolted to the anti-slavery side. His election to the House had been strongly contested by Shaw and the validity of Hansen's claim had been established upon a technical point. The citizens of Pike County, however, were not satisfied, and had the contest reopened. This time, Hansen was deprived of his seat by the pro-slavery majority. Thus the pro-slavery party secured the necessary two-thirds majority and the proposition of calling the convention was submitted to the people.

The ensuing campaign during the summer of 1824 was very exciting, noisy and bitter. It was the culmination of two years of machinations. The movement at first had gained some adherents among those honestly interested in several changes in the then existing Constitution. At first the pro-slavery interests loudly declared that the calling of the convention had nothing to do with slavery. But their adversaries soon "smoked them out" of this position and the paramount struggle became one between the friends and the enemies of the move to intensify the Black Laws of the state. Both groups organized, appointed committees, raised money, and

prepared for the election. The pro-convention party consisted mainly of radicals, "poor whites," the French settlers, and political aspirants. Their opponents were, for the most part, Protestants and those people who had been attracted to Illinois by its free Constitution.

There were some outstanding leaders on both sides of the question. On the pro-slavery side were Ex-Governor Bond, Judge Phillips, Elias K. Kane, T. W. Smith, and Benjamin West. On the opposition might be found Governor Coles, Samuel D. Lockwood, Thomas Mather, George Churchill, Rev. J. M. Peck, Rev. Thomas Lippincott, and Hooper Warren.

The few newspapers then in existence in Illinois became organs for or against the convention. Many prominent men wrote articles under the protection of a nom de plume. Such a one was "Agis," probably Governor Coles. He was anti-slavery, though he often wrote antagonistic articles just to arouse the men on his own side. Articles soon appeared signed by such names as, "A Friend to Enquiry," "Prudence," "Independence," "Caution," and "Candor."

Excitement prevailed on all sides. Many personal combats took place over the question and the entire state seemed ready, more than once, to resort to violence. The bitterness even invaded the banquet table where the toasts reflected the public temper with such sentiments as: "The enemies of the Convention: May they ride a porcupine saddle on a hard trotting horse, a long journey, without money or friends!"

Two incidents during the campaign had a decided influence against the Convention party. A mob in Vandalia burned Governor Coles in effigy and set fire to the capital. The powerful *Illinois Intelligencer*, the most influential Convention paper, due to financial troubles, passed into the hands of Governor Coles who used it to great advantage for his party.

The election in August resulted in a decisive defeat for the pro-slavery party and the calling of the convention was rejected by a majority of 1,800. An analysis of that vote shows the influence exercised by the valley settlers. If their votes had been lacking, the outcome of the election would have been uncomfortably close. While the state-wide vote stood about 3 to 2, those counties bordering the river cast a vote nearly 5 to 1 against the convention. Not an Illinois Valley county was carried by the pro-slavery party.

CHAPTER XVIII

Part Three

THE UNDERGROUND RAILWAY

The defeat of the project for a state Constitutional Convention was more of a rebuff to the rampant pro-slavery men than a consolation to the radical anti-slavery group. The Black Code still remained intact and still irritated the growing anti-slavery or abolition sentiment of the state. These people soon found release and satisfaction in extra-legal devices, the chiefest of which was the Underground Railway.

One element in the intensification of feeling between the North and South sprang out of the return of runaway negroes escaping north on their way to Canada. The fourth and fifth decades of the nineteenth century, especially after the Compromise of 1850 with its strengthened fugitive slave act, produced increased hostility between North and South. And the escaping negroes received a new sympathy in Illinois whose anti-slavery citizens helped create a tool for their aid and comfort known as the Underground Railway.

Illinois was geographically in an excellent position to assist in the "Underground Railway" movement. It was flanked on the south by Kentucky and Missouri, both slave states, while to the north of it were the Great Lakes—an excellent highway to Canada, the safe refuge for fugitive slaves.

Two distinct routes were established through different portions of the state. The first was from the initial station in the Ohio River region by way of Chester, Sparta, and Oakdale, thence to Nashville, Centralia, and on towards Chicago. The second was from the same initial station to Alton, Jerseyville, Waverly, Jacksonville, Quincy, Galesburg, Westfield in Henry County and Princeton. Aside from these direct routes there were several noteworthy stations, situated in other places. At these points, lines might meet, so that several large groups could be taken across the border simultaneously. There were also emergency stops. Some of them were Washington (Tazewell County), Metamora (Woodford County), Magnolia (Putnam County), Princeton (Bureau County), and Ottawa (La Salle County). Stations on the river were popular since north-bound boats offered a convenient and quite secure means of escape.

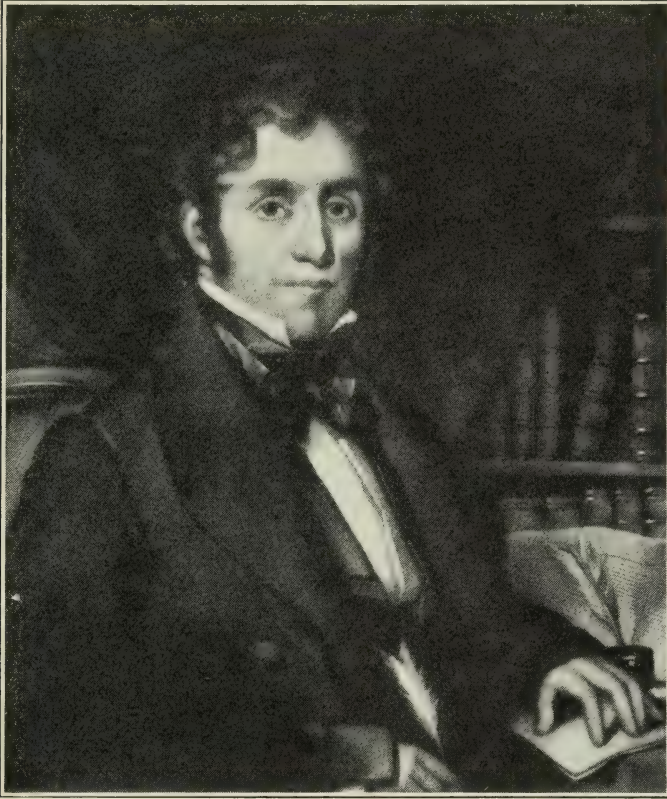
Many of the "operators" on the lines bear names familiar to all in their own localities. Eden was an important center, and scores have been assisted along their way by the Hoods, Moores, McClurkins, and the Milligans. Philo Carpenter is said to have helped 200 negroes embark in that city.

The Underground Railway could not have been a success, if the "grapevine telegraph" had not been in working order. Through it a Mr. Greene of McLean County was notified that a couple of runaway slaves were to be at his house on a certain night. They arrived and he took them to Lemont. He reported, however, that he had some difficulty in escaping two Kentucky gentlemen who were "hot on his trail."

There was a station at the home of William Virden of Wayne County. His daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Virden Fancher, said, "The slaves would hide away in thickets in the daytime and at night forage in the cornfields for roasting ears, and travel by the light of the moon." At the station, a slave was given a night's lodging, supper, breakfast, clothes, if he needed them, and money to get to the next station. If a fugitive slave stopped at a place that was not a station, the resident sent him to the next anti-slavery man to east or north, and so on, until a station was reached. Thus, many homes became emergency stations. Erasmus Mahon of McLean County tells how he happened upon two fugitives, hidden in a thicket. Upon questioning them he discovered that his own father was helping them to escape. As he talked to them further, he found that they were husband and wife who were fleeing to avoid separation.

The up passage on the Underground Railway was not always smooth. Many fugitives were captured en route and taken back to the South. One day in 1849, a negro from St. Louis named John Buckner arrived in Princeton. Soon he was seized by two men from Missouri. Owen Lovejoy swore out a warrant for them all on the charge of riot, and had them put up for trial. A heated argument in the court room resulted and with the help of sympathetic bystanders, Buckner escaped.

At Sparta, a Mr. Burlingame told a slave hunter to come to his home for the fugitive if he dared! The slave he had harbored went on his way that night in peace. Many of the operators were arrested for their part in the illegal traffic of the Underground Railway. Among them were Owen Lovejoy of Princeton, Deacon Cushing of Will County, John Hassock, and Dr. Joseph Stout of Ottawa. They were all acquitted on a technicality. Dr. Samuel Willard and Julius Willard of Jacksonville were tried in 1843. They pleaded guilty, paying a fine of one dollar and costs. In 1859, John Hassock was arrested again when he was found helping "Nigger Jim" to escape from court where he was being held. At the trial, Mr. Hassock made a brilliant speech, glowing with earnest philan-



BENJAMIN LUNDY

The Valley's most famous abolitionist, a resident of
Putnam County

thropy and fearlessness. He was fined \$591. The story of his arrest, trial, speech, and fine was printed in nearly every Illinois paper.

Pike County had very few stations on the main line of the Railway. However, many citizens were glad and proud to shelter a runaway. Many respectable residents were severely criticized for their interest in this activity.

Sometimes, the operators had to resort to underhand methods. Slaves often mysteriously disappeared from jail when they had been captured en route. Such was the case when a man named Thompson, living on the upper Mackinaw, apprehended a runaway and had him put into prison.

The origin of this fascinating institution is not certain knowledge. H. B. Leeper, an old resident of Illinois, says that it started in 1819-1820 with a small colony of anti-slavery people who moved to Bond County, Illinois, from Brown County, Kentucky. Other centers, especially in the upper Illinois Valley sprang up among the New England emigrants.

The Underground Railway had a widespread following in the upper valley largely free from the southern influence. Its effectiveness was greatly increased when the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy, the Rock Island, and the Illinois Central Lines gave access to Canada by way of the Great Lakes.

CHAPTER XVIII

Part Four

FEELING BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR

The anti-slavery sentiment ran so high in some places that even a bona fide owner was prevented by mob action from recovering his legitimate slave property. In retaliation, the southern planters began to kidnap their slaves in order to get them back and out of the clutches of radical northerners. The United States Fugitive Slave Law in existence at that time, made it almost impossible to capture and punish any one for kidnapping slaves. This soon became a very profitable business and was carried on to a large extent by bands of outlaws, who kidnapped free negroes and indentured servants, took them South and resold them for high prices.

Large groups worked together in the kidnapping game. They might seize any apparently unattached negroes and rush them to the Ohio or the Mississippi River, where they were sold to accomplices. The blacks were often shifted from place to place by different groups of men until representatives from the South arrived and bought the captives. This nicely evaded the letter of the law, which prohibited the abducting of negroes out of any state.

Finally, in 1825, an act to "more effectually prevent kidnapping" was passed in Illinois. A penalty of from twenty-five to 100 stripes, or a fine of \$1,000 might be imposed.

Meanwhile, agitation kept increasing. The Underground Railway and the kidnapping simply served to make the situation worse, and there is no evidence that any great attempt was made to enforce the law passed. Many private individuals kept the question open with their red-hot agitation. Benjamin Lundy, issuing many pamphlets, hoped to spread throughout the West, the anti-slavery societies which were inaugurated in 1816, when he founded the Union Humanitarian Society, in western Ohio. Greeley declared that the words of Lundy contained the whole anti-slavery germ.

By '36, a similar organization was fostered in Putnam County. The movement soon spread to Will, Bureau, Jersey and Adams counties. The entire state had taken such an interest, that it was decided to form one

large state society with two traveling agents, in charge. The Rev. Chauncy Cook and W. T. Allen were accordingly sent from the state meeting at Alton, October 27, 1836.

It seems natural that the churches would be active against slavery. The Reformed Presbyterians at both Sparta and Eden intimated that it would probably be a good thing if the Union that was tainted with slavery, did dissolve. In 1843, the church at Hill Prairie sent a very forceful anti-slavery petition to Congress. In the next year, the Alton Presbytery was influential in smothering a revolution against slavery that was rising in that community. The Presbyterians were joined in their hatred of the institution by the Baptists and Methodists but the Episcopalians fluctuated from one side to the other, and the Universalists openly endorsed slavery.

Various anti-slavery leaders arose in different parts of the state. At Bloomington, the Rev. Levi Spurgeon was prominent, and James Wallace at Hill Prairie, Randolph County, wrote about slavery, using the old Puritan challenge of the supremacy of God and the equality of men. At Hoopes-ton lived Alba Honeywell, who was active in the American Anti-Slavery Society, and for many years edited their paper, the *Standard*. At Alton, we find the illustrious Elijah Lovejoy, who believed in the power of the sword and sent forth from his press, burning editorials on the evils of slavery. He was killed while defending his printing press from an angry mob of slave holders. His work was carried on by his brother, Owen, at Princeton, who was active in the Underground Railway movement and was known for miles around as a friend to the blacks.

It cannot be supposed, however, that the majority in Illinois was in favor of Abolition. In Cass County, there was a large and strong group of southern sympathizers led by Dr. Samuel Christy. When the Civil war broke out they formed the "Knights of the Golden Circle" for the purpose of resisting the draft. Z. Eastman and J. M. Peck who had been opposed to the Convention in 1824 were likewise opposed to Abolition in 1830, and refused to accept a radical program.

Agitation was kept up, however, for while individuals, societies, and churches were working for the freedom of the negro, the press not only praised them for their work but also urged them on to more. After Lovejoy died, the official anti-slavery paper was published at Hennepin, the Shawneetown *Gazette* fostered by Henry Eddy was decidedly anti-slavery, as was the Edwardsville *Spectator* of Madison County. Within a stone's throw from these free publications, might be found two prominent slave papers—the *Republican Advocate* and the *Star of the West*, sent out from Kaskaskia and Edwardsville, respectively.

CHAPTER XVIII

Part Five

LEGAL STATUS

The legal status of the negro in Illinois shows an interesting evolution from the days of French occupancy to the adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment. The ordinance of 1787, legislating for the entire Northwest Territory of which Illinois was a part, forbade slavery with the following words:

"There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in such territory, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly punished."

Section III provided further that persons bound by articles of indenture should fulfill their contracts and serve out their time, but any children born after 1787, of indentured parents, should be free—males at the age of twenty-one and females at the age of eighteen years.

Conditions changed early. An act was adopted in Illinois making it lawful for any person having servants who owed service in another state to bring them to Illinois and register them as "Indentures." In 1817, a bill was passed repealing these measures but the Governor vetoed it.

Many of the first settlers were pro-slavery and were determined that even though Illinois was destined by its geography to become a free state, negroes there should become and remain slaves. By the system of indenture and other black laws, they so well succeeded that an indentured black man in Illinois was very little better situated than a Georgia cotton picker.

With the years these black laws were intensified. Immigration of "persons of color" into the state was prohibited; emancipation was discouraged, the owner being required to execute a bond of \$1,000. If he neglected to do so, he was liable to a fine of \$200.

This statute forbade anyone to harbor a slave, or hinder an owner from retaking his runaway slave. Another declared that every black without a proper certificate was held as a fugitive and might be publicly sold at the end of a year. Later, negroes were prevented from appearing in court as witnesses when the parties were white.

The Constitution of 1848 intensified the "Black Code" by an article

which had for its object "to effectually prohibit free persons of color from immigration to and settle in this state; and to effectually prevent the owners of slaves from bringing them into this state for the purpose of setting them free."

A law of 1853 punished the introduction of a free colored person into the state by a fine of from \$100 to \$500, and declared any negro who came thus into Illinois liable, within ten days, to arrest and fine. If he had no money, he must serve his fine out in labor. This act, however, was put into force in only three cases. The case of one fugitive was brought up before Judge Sullivan who declared that particular section void because it assumed legislation upon a subject over which Congress, by the United States Constitution had been given exclusive control. The Democrats were staunch in their defense of the Act of 1853, since they declared that white labor should be protected. The influx of contrabands during the Civil war into the Cairo territory gave point to this argument.

The Constitutional Convention of 1862 offered the state a new constitution, of which Act XVIII summarized the "Slave Code" already in existence. The vote on this particular article was separate from the vote on which the new Constitution as a whole was lost by a majority of 16,000. The popular majority of more than 100,000 upon this radical slave article, however, reflected the pro-slavery feeling of the people at that time.

As time went on, and slavery became a national issue, the temper of the state changed. This may be seen by reviewing, in brief, a few cases that incurred state-wide interest. The decisions rendered by the Illinois Supreme Court show clearly the trend of the times.

1. Nance vs. Howard, 1828. Decision: "Registered servants are goods and chattels and can be sold on execution."

2. Phoebe vs. William Jay, 1828. Decision: "Holding of indentured servants is legal and can be transferred."

3. Boon vs. Joliet, 1836. Decision: "Children of indentured servants should not be generally held as slaves, but where masters held a legal right in case of agreement. The term should not extend beyond the twenty-first birthday in the case of males and the eighteenth for females."

4. Jarrot vs. Jarrot, 1843. Decision: "The descendants of the old French settlers, born since the Ordinance of 1787 and before or since the adoption of the Constitution of Illinois, cannot be held in slavery in this state."

5. Baily vs. Cromwell, 1840; King vs. Cook, 1841; Phoebe vs. Jay, 1842; Sarah vs. Borders, 1843. Decision: "The presumption of the law in Illinois is that every person is free without regard to color" and "the sale of a free person is illegal."

6. The John D. Caton decision in 1843 declared that a slave voluntarily brought to the state was thereby freed.

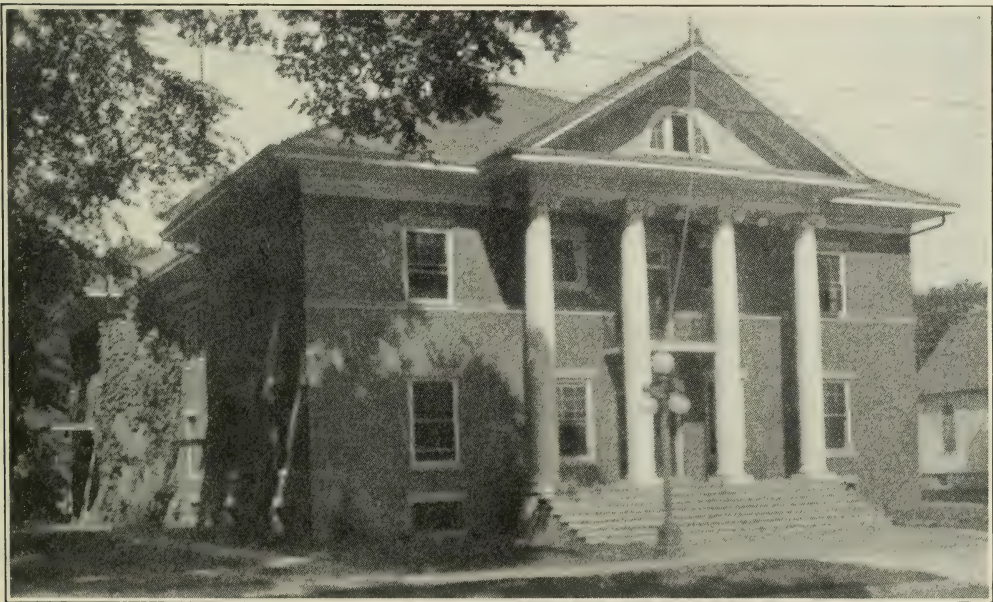
7. Willard vs. People. Decision: "The slave of a master passing through the state was not therefore freed."

8. Nelson vs. People. Decision, by the Supreme Court: "That the sale of a negro under the Act of 1853 did not reduce him to slavery."

The act of 1853 and all the Black Code were repealed in 1865 and within the next four years the state approved the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments to the United States Constitution.



SOUTH MAIN STREET, PRINCETON



CITY HALL, PRINCETON

CHAPTER XIX

LINCOLN AND THE VALLEY

Barton in his brilliant style spoke of Lincoln and Illinois as "twin-born." Would it not be more true to say that Lincoln was a son of the Illinois Valley? True it is that he entered the upper valley of the Sangamon, the principal tributary of the Illinois, when past twenty-one but perhaps few public men have been less crystallized in character, morality and thought upon turning their majority than was Abraham Lincoln. Like the valley that he entered he was uncultivated soil at twenty-one and from 1830 until he left for his inauguration his whole life's activity and thought was essentially that of the central Illinois Valley region. How significant it is that his thirty most formative years coincided with the large growth of Illinois that lifted it from 150,000 people when he entered to approximately 2,000,000 in 1860. This generation saw the great constructive work in building the social structure of Illinois; her waterways, railroads, school system, press, churches, colleges and other social institutions were developed simultaneously with the unfolding of Lincoln's own personal characteristics. Moreover, much of his self-discovery was effected in helping with this development of the institutions of the state.

Although the world has come to acclaim him as the most cosmopolitan of America's son yet it is equally true that of all our great men he was perhaps most indigenous or local in his thought, mode of expression, sympathies and interests. He was a great neighbor. It is very interesting to see how the rough frontier psychology of Illinois appealed to the man and how true his own personality rang to the frontier man. Almost his first public appearance after entering the state is characteristic both of the temper of the times and of Lincoln. It is recounted that he put his early experiences as a member of a Lyceum, a rural debating society, at Gentryville, Indiana, to good account the first few months he was in Illinois. Whitney recounts "that a candidate for the Legislature * * * made a speech in the Hanks neighborhood on the then current political issue on the improvement of the navigation of the Sangamon River. (He) seems to have been opposed to its improvement in navigation and Lincoln in favor of it. * * * So John (an uncle) brought out a box which Abe mounted and made his oratorical bow to the sovereigns of his

adopted state." It was the appeal of the river and its life that carried him from Macon County to the heart of the state on the lower Sangamon River. Nothing could be more redolent of the interesting life and consciousness of the state than that canoe trip from Macon County down to the neighborhood of Springfield where he and two companions threw together a flatboat and after loading it with the crude products of the frontier piloted it to New Orleans as all men did who had products of the farm for sale. We can easily believe that this not only fused him to the life of the West but also was one of the great formative experiences of his life. The colorful experience in getting the flatboat over Rutledge's dam at New Salem determined his future career for we soon find him back in that little, though remarkable, settlement, New Salem, today little more than a ruins. The readiness with which this frontier village took up this stranger who entered its portals without money, friends, or baggage indicated that he had come to his own kind. Although small and primitive, there was much in this little community to fire the spirit of this rough hewn man. Not only did he find a congenial atmosphere where his peculiar mental quirks, outlook upon life, his droll humor and his intense desire to play the game were accepted at par value but in a more dynamic way certain unusual influences played upon the man.

He was fortunate in his first teacher, Mentor Graham, who had a profound influence upon his mental development both then and in the years to come. Here, too, he entered into the debates of the country lyceum which has kindled in the breast of many an uncouth lad a desire to move mightily among his fellow men. Here, for the first time, he found a group who loved books and it seems authentic that he was urged and tempted to attend Illinois College lying near by. Even though this was denied him the kindled ambition perhaps bestirred him to self-education to a very great degree.

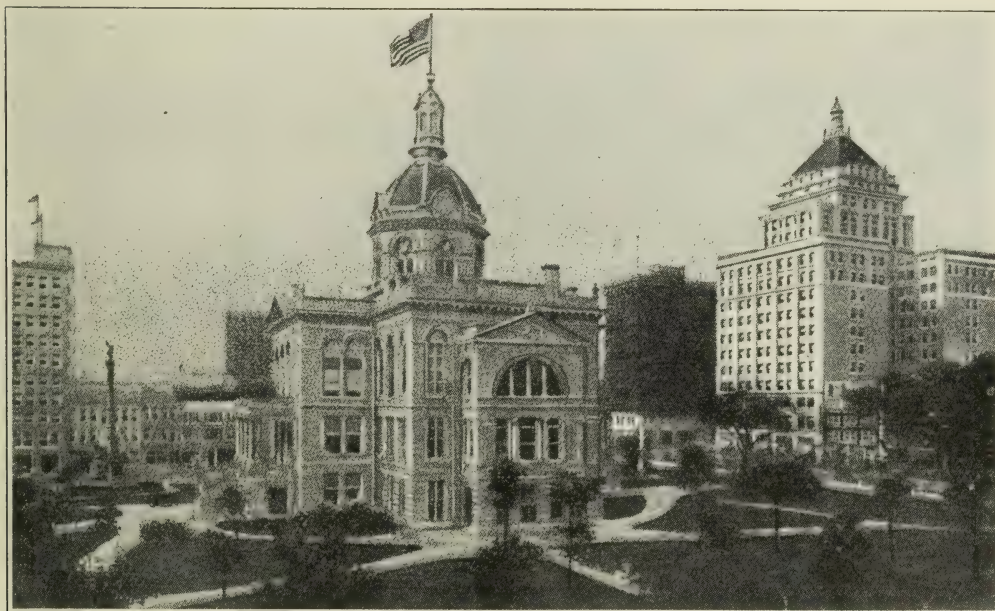
New Salem had other than intellectual appeals for this new-comer. How he entered into and reveled in the games, wrestling matches, athletic contests, frontier horse races, the pitching of horseshoes. In many of the matches of wit and muscle he soon came to excel and from this fact acquired a wide and intimate comradeship and acquaintanceship. This stood him in good stead in at least two of his early activities.

It was largely responsible for his being selected captain in the Black Hawk war where he got his first experience and opportunity in the handling of mature men as well as a wider acquaintance and reputation for his second adventure in public life, stumping for the Legislature where his service was to be long and highly satisfactory both to his neighbors and to himself.

The high points of his political experience in the state are again identified most intimately with the vital things of the Illinois River Valley.



PEORIA COUNTY'S FIRST COURTHOUSE, PEORIA
Built in 1836



PRESENT PEORIA COUNTY COURTHOUSE, PEORIA

As one of the "Long Nine" in the Legislature he was largely responsible for the adoption of the fantastic internal improvement scheme of 1834. The price for his support was the removal of the state capital from Vandalia to his then home, Springfield. For the support of this disastrous scheme of internal improvement he has been most roundly abused by so sound a critic as Governor Ford but it is significant that his support of this unfortunate project, seemingly, in no way impaired his future standing in the state. The neighborhood as well as the state was so intensely interested in the project that there was little basis for criticism of any leader. It was little less than a universal mania and particularly gripping upon that element of the population of the state expressing themselves economically through the Illinois River Valley, for the chief feature of the project in their minds was the cutting of the Illinois-Michigan Canal which would make their river as it is to become in the fall months of 1932, the first great internal waterway. Nearly every experience in Lincoln's life sprang out of the valley. His short two-year term as a Congressman was little less than a disappointment to both friends and himself and he came home confident that his future career lay in the law among the home folks.

Simultaneously with election as the only Whig Congressman from Illinois in 1847 came a very significant experience which has been sadly underrated by biographers of Abraham Lincoln. It was the Chicago Waterway Convention which assembled in Chicago July 5, 1847, to protest the unfavorable attitude of President James K. Polk toward appropriations for improvements in lake harbors, especially that of Chicago. There has been waged a very sharp controversy as to whether this was Lincoln's first view of Chicago. Today it seems surprising that a man who had entered so widely into so many activities in his state as Lincoln, having for half a generation been prominent at the bar and in his earlier day as surveyor, could have escaped being called to the principal city of his state. Whether this was the first or second or third visit, it was undoubtedly a great day in the career of Abraham Lincoln. The political significance of the visit must have touched him. Starting politics probably as a Jacksonian Democrat and living in a region more or less Democratic in its tendencies, he now, as a pronounced Whig, must have realized that his future strength would have to be won from an element of the state's population to which he was more or less foreign, the New England element concentrated in Chicago and the upper counties of the Illinois Valley.

The Convention had called the great leaders of the nation, Webster, Clay, Benton, Cass, all of whom responded in letters of considerable importance. Corwin of Ohio was there. Horace Greeley reported the Convention for the *New York Tribune*. Thurlow Weed was in attendance.

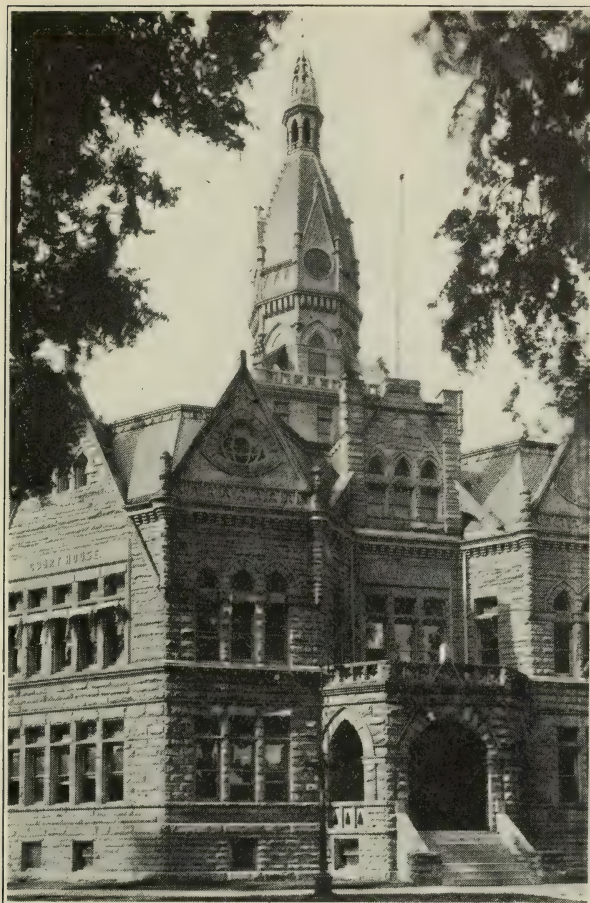
After David Dudley Field spoke for the administration it fell to the lot of Abraham Lincoln to deliver a tactful answer which apparently was received very kindly by the Convention body. It was the first time this backwoods legislator had seen, heard, and measured his mental metal with the great men of the East and the issue was internal improvements—particularly the waterway in which the Illinois River was such a vital link.

Lincoln had lived very widely and vitally in the life of the valley. In his first days as a surveyor he had laid out many town sites through a very wide region. The little town of Albany on the Mississippi, thirty miles above Moline, had been surveyed by him, likewise New Boston where a recent excavation for a state road uncovered a cornerstone set by his hand. Throughout many of the counties like Macon, Sangamon, Tazewell, Schuyler, and Fulton are evidences of his work as a surveyor. Among the things Lincoln did instinctively well in this homespun society was the more or less extemporaneous political stump speaking. The mode of his thought, the sharp play of humor, the simplicity of his language, a conviction of truth in what he said, made him a favorite and even before his great classic debate with Douglas, brought him to the attention of the whole state and nation. He won a very wide reputation in central Illinois by his effectiveness as a stump speaker.

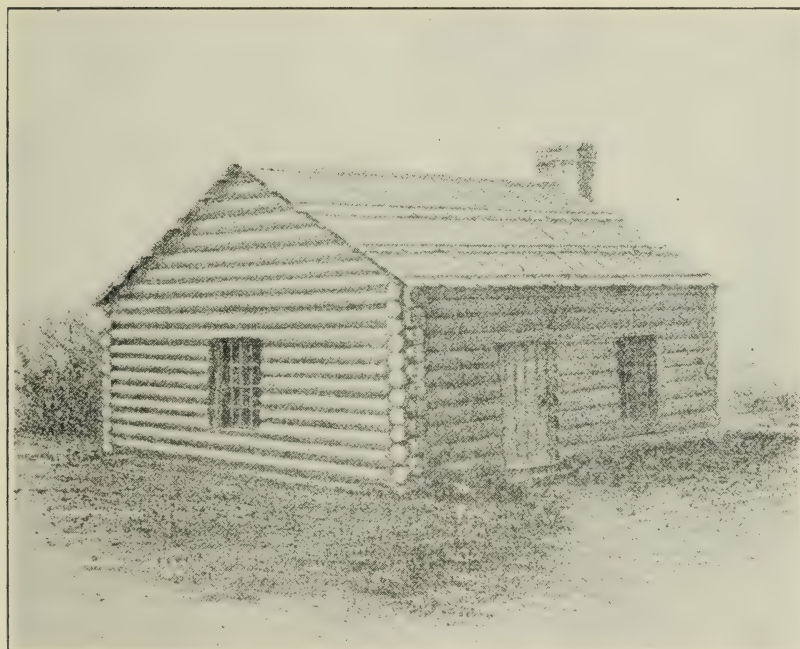
He came to know more men as a lawyer than perhaps in any other activity. For years he rode the old Eighth Circuit, a region comprising fifteen counties, a large share falling within our study, a region large enough to constitute a very considerable state 150 miles long and 100 miles wide. His mode of dress, expression, entertainment, and thought made it inevitable that he should acquire a very wide acquaintance and appreciation in this region. The inability of Mr. Lincoln to hold himself aloof from the common man is perhaps reflected best in the impression he made upon an early settler of Tazewell County who says he used to see Lincoln passing through Washington (Illinois) on his way to attend court at Metamora and he remembered him as "dressed in a homespun coat which came below his knees and was out at both elbows."

Whitney gives the following intimate picture of his life on this old circuit:

"Courts lasted nearly six months in the year, and the judge and lawyers generally contrived to spend as many Sabbaths at home as they could. Lincoln did not join in this effort, but, contrariwise, when he set out on a tour of the circuit, generally continued until the end. Nothing could be duller than remaining on the Sabbath in a country inn of that time after adjournment of court. Good cheer had expended its force during court week, and blank dullness succeeded; but Lincoln would entertain the few lingering roustabouts of the barroom with as great zest, apparently, as he had previously entertained the court and bar, and then would hitch up his horse, 'Old Tom,' as he was called, and, solitary and



PIKE COUNTY COURTHOUSE, PITTSFIELD



FIRST PIKE COUNTY COURTHOUSE, 1821

alone, ride off to the next term in course. One would naturally suppose that the leading lawyer of the circuit, in a pursuit which occupied nearly half his time, would make himself comfortable, but he did not. His horse was as rawboned and weird-looking as himself; and his buggy, an open one, as rude as either; his attire was that of an ordinary farmer or stock-raiser, while the sum total of his baggage consisted of a very attenuated carpetbag, an old weather-beaten umbrella, and a short blue cloak reaching to his hips—a style which was prevalent during the Mexican war. This he had procured at Washington while a Congressman, and carried about with him as a winter covering for years thereafter. He read no law on the circuit, except when needed for a special case, nor did he read general literature. Instead he would read and study a pocket geometry, which he carried about with him; after the year 1854 he gave especial attention to the newspapers, and watched the growth and drift of political sentiment in that way more assiduously than any one whom I ever knew."

There are many courthouses far from the old Eighth Judicial Circuit which today are extremely proud of a bit of handwriting or of a court record that authenticates their claim to have been visited by the lawyer, Lincoln, in a professional capacity. How proud the little old town of Oquawka is today to proclaim his presence at the quaint early courthouse and how ready to point out to a stranger the home where he was entertained and the four-poster bed where he slept.

That law case most famous to the minds of Illinois today, the Duff-Armstrong Murder trial, perhaps reveals this identity of the personality of Lincoln with the temper of his times most admirably. The setting of the case is almost melodramatic, the frontier camp meeting in the woods, the liquor wagon half a mile away, the inevitable fist fight among the rough and boisterous youth, the appeal of Duff's old mother, who, without friends, influence, or money, hastens to this now-famous lawyer in distant Springfield who once as a homeless, diffident boy had received the warmest hospitality and sympathy at her hearth, the readiness with which Lincoln without hope of reward or public acclaim, because the feeling against Duff was pronounced, hastens to the aid of this old and half-forgotten friend now stricken with humiliation and grief. How typical of the spirit of the frontier is this personal loyalty. Lincoln's handling of the case is redolent of frontier law and order. His manipulation of the almanac is characteristic of the inherent wit and resourcefulness of the frontier man.

Intensely loyal to friends, he was served with a loyalty unsurpassed. An example of this was the heroic self-sacrifice of Congressman Kellogg of the Peoria District in offering his conciliatory resolutions to the seceding states. He seemed fully aware of the fatal results to his own political career but after consultation with the President-elect made the sacrifice for his great leader and friend.

How easy it is to see a parallel between the evolution in the spirit of the state of Illinois and the development of the political mind of Abraham Lincoln. Without the Great Lakes, the Illinois River, the Illinois-Michigan Canal, the state would perhaps have found its spiritual unity with the South from which she had derived the majority of her immigrants before 1830. But the Erie Canal, the Lakes, and the Waterway of the Illinois Valley made her an anomaly, a hybrid state, a cross between the North and the South. And how like this was the mental evolution of Lincoln. At his majority a Jacksonian Democrat, gradually becoming a Whig and then an Anti-Nebraska man. The founder of the Republican party and finally the interpreter of both North and South to each other who could say, "With malice toward none; with charity for all."

CHAPTER XX

DEAD TOWNS

"Railroads are meat for some towns: they are rank poison for others," once remarked the president of the largest line of steamboats on the Ohio River. And he went on to point out that while the coming of the railroad had served to build up many new communities along the tracks, it had a most lamentable influence on the river towns which depended upon the river traffic to keep them in touch with the rest of the world, to carry their imports and exports.

This change from River to Rail has been unfortunate for those "river-minded" inland towns; unfortunate, but the price this country pays for progress. A change in the prevalent mode of transportation can play havoc with the life of the population dependent upon that mode. Boundary lines, centers of population, alter; towns dwindle and dry up; new communities are born over night, as the decline of one type of transportation and the growth of another take place. That was what happened on the western rivers when the coming of the iron horse doomed the steamboat lines and many of the river towns to the virtual extinction that followed the passing of the steamboat trade.

Where there is no traffic common carriers perish. Illinois has plenty of new towns and cities built up by the fine big railroads; but she has also numerous dead or sleeping towns, retarded communities throughout the Illinois Valley, to which the coming of the railroads and the passing of the river lines was a rank poison as the old steamboat owner said.

And what was true of the river was true of the Illinois and Michigan Canal, that once important highway of traffic so important to the development of early Chicago.

The sleeping towns on the dead Canal—the tragedy of it! There was a time, and within the memory of people now living when big canal boats, loaded with passengers and freight and drawn by mules on the towpath, plodded from Chicago on southward to La Salle where waited the steamboats of the Illinois River to carry consignments of freight southward. The canal boats stopped at many towns along the route and did a good business. And most of those towns have disappeared—gone the way of all flesh because the life blood of their transportation

ceased to flow. Others still exist, eclipsed by other communities which are nearer railroads.

Starting from Chicago the canal boats first touched at Lemont, once a busy rock-quarrying center. Many varieties of cut stone were sent by canal boat from Lemont to Chicago. Many modern Chicago buildings received their building stone from Lemont by canal boat. It was a thriving little town, but today has practically fallen asleep.

A score of miles farther down the Canal the boats "made" Lockport, where there was a canal lock and dam, as well as flour mills, a paper mill, stores and big grain warehouses. They have gone; Lockport has turned to other pursuits. Joliet, however, the next town, is still a busy and wealthy place—the one large town on the Canal today. Channahon, a few miles down, was once a busy place but is practically non-existent today. Next in order is Seneca, once called Crotty; an important place in canal days. A fleet of canal boats and barges operated by the firm of Robinson & Yorke did a land-office business out of Seneca. There also was a large grain and lumber activity, though the little Seneca of today gives no hint of its former activity.

Marseilles, slightly below Seneca, is the location of one of the big new locks and dam, the same size as those of the Panama Canal, which will help preserve an adequate channel in the new Lakes-to-Gulf Waterway hard by the old Canal.

The first of the eclipsed towns on the Illinois River proper, beyond the end of the Canal at La Salle, is Peru. In the period between 1875 and 1882 a flourishing shipping point, Peru was also the location of a large ice business operated by Huse-Loomis Company, who with their fleet of more than a hundred barges and towboats shipped hundreds of tons of ice south to the lower river each year. This company owned a big dry dock also. Here they built ice barges as long as 325 feet and forty foot beam which they would load to a depth of eight or ten feet in the winter and tow to the South in the following spring. Also this same company would fill ice houses at McCormick Slough and other places for shipment south by river in hot weather. But times have changed; the ice houses have gone, the river is deserted, the town is a mere shadow of its former self; and the same is true of Depue, a few miles below which had an ice plant and big breweries.

Hennepin, located at the big bend in the Illinois from which the Hennepin Canal extends to the Mississippi, was once a very busy place with its stores and warehouses and grain storage and shipping; but since the Hennepin Canal is idle and the traffic on the River dead, the town of Hennepin is asleep also.

Henry, twelve miles down the river, was once the shipping point for all the farmers of the surrounding country and in the 'Eighties had a pop-



HISTORIC OLD HENNEPIN SHOWING THE HIGH SHORE LINE AND
THE LARGE RIVER ELEVATOR READY FOR INCREASING BUSINESS
WITH THE COMPLETION OF THE ILLINOIS WATERWAYS

ulation of 4,000. Now it has 1,500. Sparland on the opposite side of the River is dead also. Chillicothe, twenty miles above Peoria, is still a place to be reckoned with, though smaller than a generation ago, its decline perhaps checked by the unusual activities incidental to being a subdivision on the transcontinental Santa Fe Railroad. In 1880 Rome, two miles below Chillicothe, was a good live place. In those days the Illinois Packet Company was running three boats a week on the Illinois River, and there was always plenty of business in and out of Rome. It is little more than a summer resort today.

The little town of Spring Bay, located ten miles above Peoria but on the opposite side of the River is a typical example of what the railroads have done to enhance the growth of one town and retard that of another. There is nothing at Spring Bay now to indicate that it was once an important center of shipping and business; but such was the case. At one time it was a rival of Peoria. More business was actually transacted over Spring Bay's levee than over Peoria's. The change in the mode of transportation set Spring Bay back a generation. Peoria with her splendid railroad facilities forged ahead until she is one of the great cities of the state.

Among the towns of the Illinois Valley which have largely ceased to function, Mount Palatine in Putnam County furnishes a good example of how the changing conditions of life of any vicinity draw prosperity from one community and turn it towards another. Mount Palatine was once the center of learning of Putnam County and environs. It had one of the early educational institutions of the state which attained to the dignity of a "college." Today its existence is barely indicated on the map of Illinois. The town is located on the rich strip of prairie running eastward from a line of timber bordering the Illinois River, at the dividing line between Putnam and La Salle counties. The town was laid out in 1849 by Christopher Winters with the avowed intention of starting "a live Yankee Town" on his land, and also of making it an educational center. Winters had bought a large tract of this rich prairie land in 1830 and between that year and the laying out of his town in 1849 had been developing his plans. The first house was erected in 1842. The seminary or academy was already under way. The Rev. Otis Fisher who had been instrumental in building up an academy at Granville, came over to Mount Palatine and took charge of the school there. He assumed his duties as superintendent in 1842, the school being housed in a substantial red brick building. For fifteen years the institution flourished and the town grew. Students from the country roundabout came to Mount Palatine to study. Winter had the rank of his school raised from seminary to the dignity of college. And as a college it continued for

fifteen years. Meantime the Illinois Central Railroad had been extended to the town of Tonica, six miles distant, which began to grow at the expense of Mount Palatine. The College no longer proved a profitable undertaking. It was sold to the Catholics in 1860 on condition that they would maintain a school at the place. This they have done ever since. The town continued to go down hill, although as late as 1879 there were in Mount Palatine three churches, a good district school, two general stores, a blacksmith and wagon shop or two, and, scattered over an area of sixty acres, about 100 inhabitants.

Not alone was the change from the steamboat to railway responsible for the decline of numerous towns throughout the length and breadth of the Illinois River Valley. Other causes contributed to it, chief among which was the frantic speculation in Illinois land which immediately preceded the Panic of 1837. It was the age of the great migration; the eyes of Easterners were fixed upon the vast strange country west of the Alleghanies. Across the mountains from the East poured the settlers by thousands eager for new homes and a place to invest the dollars they brought with them.

The Illinois Valley got its share and the land promoters at once put in their appearance and capitalized on the growing craze for land speculation. Towns sprang up like magic, aided by the land promoters, whose persistency in boosting the real estate they had for sale has a very modern sound in our ears. They set out to sell land, acreage and town lots, some of which was good, some well nigh worthless, to people who had never seen it. They advertised in papers all over the country. The effete dwellers in the East, scanning these colorful ads setting forth the merits of land in the new "West" bought, "sight unseen," and frequently awoke to the fact that they had been swindled—sometimes only after they had crossed the mountains and seen their worthless purchases.

Every community that had the least likelihood of ever becoming a fair sized village was boomed out of all reason. The natural richness of Illinois soil and the salubrity of her climate were reasons enough to furnish the promoters with a basis to work on. Their imagination did the rest. On paper each of these newly-laid-out towns had a rosy future before it. Every village with the smallest prospect of growth, and in some cases uninhabited spots in the wilderness, had large areas staked off into town lots and platted in highly ornamental style for the "information" of purchasers. As an example of the florid style of advertising real estate in those days, the following, published in many of the large American newspapers in the year 1836, is a fair example:

1,000 Lots for Sale in the City of Brooklyn—
Sale October 27, 28 and 29, 1836.

This city is situated on the LaMoine River, nearly in the center of the Military Tract, on a direct line from Beardstown, on the Illinois River to Commerce, on the Mississippi River, by way of Rushville and Carthage; from Quincy on the Mississippi to Peoria on the Illinois; from Mt. Sterling to Macomb.

The City of Brooklyn, in its local situation with regard to other places of business, is a place of very considerable importance; being 14 miles from Rushville; 23 miles from Carthage; 27 miles from Commerce; 40 miles from Quincy; 18 miles from Macomb; 25 miles from Beardstown and 70 miles from Peoria.

History has not yet given an account of a country (in point of health, beauty and fertility) equal to the one surrounding this city. LaMoine River is a most delightful stream, affording water at all seasons of the year for immense machinery. It has been examined by competent engineers from its mouth to this city, and the estimated cost to construct dams, and locks to make it a perpetual navigable stream, is \$30,000. The water power gained by the construction of said dams must, and will pay 10% per annum on the stock exclusive of tolls. The proprietors think the stock worth a premium of 10%. They intend having a company chartered at the next session of the Legislature of this state to accomplish this great and desirable object.

The proprietors have no hesitancy in saying that there is no hazard in the purchase of lots in this city, as there is no city on any canal in the United States, which has advantages equal to Brooklyn in point of health, beauty and soil; the farmers producing one half to double the quantity of wheat and corn over any other state in the Union.

The number of 1,000 lots will be laid off for a beginning, many of which will be sold in different cities throughout the United States. Agents selling abroad will recollect that all numbers of lots marked for sale at home will not be offered abroad.

Terms—10 per cent on all sales, cash in hand. The balance in six and twelve months. * * *

This advertisement which appeared in the *Saturday Courier* of Philadelphia, the *Courier and Enquirer* of New York, the *Advertiser* of Louisville, the *Eagle* of Maysville, Kentucky, the *Missouri Republican* of St. Louis, in addition to the more local press of Palmyra, Missouri, Quincy, Jacksonville and Springfield, Illinois, gave Brooklyn a good send off. But where is Brooklyn today? One must have very good eyesight to find the least trace of it on the map of Illinois. The "city" for which great things were prophesied, failed to grow.

In addition to these towns which did not grow or which grew awhile and then fell back, there were others which never had any actual existence at all. Such was the famous Rollingstone, to which a whole town-full of settlers came out from the East, drawn by false advertisements, only to die on the wind-swept prairie in winter or wander hopelessly back to New York whence they had come.

Among other retarded towns of the Illinois Valley might be mentioned Milton, New York, Richmond, Centreville, Ridgeville, Mosco, Mt. Meacham, Newberg, all in Schuyler County.

Pike County, extending from the Illinois River on the east to the Mississippi on the west, did an enormous river business in the heyday of steamboat activity. Plying regularly and frequently along the channels of both rivers, the steamboats found plenty of business awaiting them at the levees of flourishing Pike County communities. Cincinnati Landing on the Mississippi is a good illustration of a Pike County steamboat town. In 1848 it did the biggest river business of all the towns in the county on either river. Up-river and down-river packets brought cargoes of freight and deckloads of passengers to its wharf. The largest of the big white New Orleans steamers served Cincinnati Landing. The coming of the railroads, however, heralding the decline of the river business, pulled the old river town from its eminence as a trade center. Its business has gone by the board and the town has become a dead letter.

The list of eclipsed towns of the Illinois Valley might be strung out indefinitely. Some are still possessed of considerable vitality, though nothing like what they had of old. Others are looking forward to a reawakening which will re-establish them once more as places of consequence. And such a development is not entirely unthinkable, now that steamboating, in its modern aspect, has begun again on the Western Rivers.

As an illustration, news comes as this page is written that the old river town of Valley City on the Illinois, once known as Griggsville Landing—a busy shipping point in the days when all the incoming and outbound freight of Griggsville and other adjacent towns passed over its levee—is feeling the vitalizing effects of this reawakening river business. Fully cognizant of the strategic location of Valley City as a river shipping point, the Cast Stone Company, large manufacturers of building materials, have established their terminal site there. Here the great fleets of barges, carrying thousands of tons of “cast stone” will assemble to be towed by powerful towboats to their destinations in the North, South, East and West. And there will be great activity at Griggsville Landing once more, whose citizens doubtless look—and with reason now—for a return of the old times.

CHAPTER XXI

FARMING IN THE ILLINOIS VALLEY

From aboriginal days to the present time farming has been the outstanding pursuit of men in the Illinois Valley. This had been foreordained in the Glacial Period. The exceedingly thick deposit left by the Wisconsin Glacier which, with its high percentage of phosphorous, its open porous clays and its rich deposit of silt throughout the valley, provides the finest seed bed for cereals, particularly for corn, in the United States. The first Americans in the valley came for no other purpose than to make a rural home. Planting their home lot in the edge of the woods, which contributed so much to their daily needs, they found easy planting in the rich leaf mold rendered available for crops by the simple process called "deadenin'." Sprung from ancestors who in their turn had conquered the forests, such a life struck them as the traditional mode of living and fitted very nicely into the domestic or household system of production which marked the early agriculture of Illinois. Added appreciation for the country came from the fact that their wooded sections were also adjacent to the river which furnished them their sole opportunity of transporting to the St. Louis or New Orleans market any surplus products which the year's toil might produce.

The principal crop of the pioneer farmer was wheat, and secondly, corn, both of which were cultivated primarily for domestic consumption. Both were easy to raise and both easily adapted to the virgin soil. In the early 'Thirties, corn was valued in barter or trade at only five cents a bushel while oats were usually too cheap to be priced. Cows with calves at the side sold for eight dollars while hogs ran loose in the woods and were hunted like wild game. Instead of money as a circulating medium it was more common to use furs and peltry. The big crop of Illinois for the first generation was wheat, the harvesting of which was a neighborhood event. To a generation familiar with labor-saving devices the amount of labor needed to harvest a small field of eight or ten acres seems almost incomprehensible.

The following picture of an old style harvest in Pike County of three-fourths of a century ago is interesting. "The wheat fields were small and two or three stout men would start out in the morning with the old-fashioned grape-vine cradles. A boy followed each cradler to straighten

out the wheat for the binder who tied it in bundles for the shocker. The harvest began after an early breakfast. At nine o'clock a lunch was brought to the field with whiskey for an appetizer and buttermilk, sweet milk, coffee, or water as the taste of the man required. Then at noon a heavy dinner with another jigger of whiskey, at three in the afternoon another lunch, and at sundown a big supper and more whiskey. It was remarkable that with so much whiskey there was not more drunkenness.

"After the harvest came the stacking and then the threshing with a flail or tramping out with horses. The harvests were long and tedious but all went well and people seemed happy in their primitive ways. That style of wheat cutting required over a dozen men and boys. Now the work that then took a whole day can be done by a man and a boy in a few hours.

"The old time corn crops were slow but sure. The ground was usually plowed by oxen and the old wooden mold-board plows. Seed was dropped by hand and covered with a hoe. The weeds were kept down with a hoe or sometimes a small plow. The crops, however, were generally good and the old timers were happy in the possession of a small piece of land and in the fullness of health's bounties."

Besides these principal food crops there were many others which added much to the pleasure and comfort of life on the frontier. Usually at the end of the corn field there was planted a patch of sorghum which could be cultivated at the same time as the corn. When ripe the boys were put to work "stripping." The blades were pulled off and stored for winter stock feed while the tops were cut off and stored for seed and chicken feed. At the first frost the stocks were cut down and hauled to the neighborhood mill whose screech could be heard for a mile on a frosty morning. The juice when boiled down gave the farmer's family its commonest form of "sweetening."

The woods were full of bees which were easily domesticated and the pioneer farmer was prone to plant a small patch of buckwheat as a source of honey. Nearly every hollow tree in the woods had its swarm of bees and it was the unwritten law of the land that the bee trees on the Government domain could be cut by the finder. For perhaps a generation this rule also applied to timber in private hands. It was not unusual to find as many as ten swarms a day. Many of the trees produced from thirty to fifty gallons each. Both honey and beeswax found a market at St. Louis and stores of the same were to be found on most of the early rafts or flatboats sent down the Illinois. One group of Schuyler County farmers as early as 1823 sent in one shipment, twenty-seven barrels of strained honey to St. Louis.

The rafting of logs, staves and hoop material down the Illinois River

was a common early enterprise and netted the owner the much prized cash. As the country settled, one of the first industries to be erected was the cooper shop, the products of which were in much demand locally for the packing of salted meats and other products of the farm designed for trade down the river.

The primitive farmer found the sandy soil of the river bottoms splendidly adapted to the growing of watermelons and muskmelons. These added much to the personal pleasure of his family. In later years, with the coming of the hard roads and the truck, they have made very remunerative much of the sandy lands in the valley which were once worthless.

The pioneer farmer grew crops now extinct. Practically every family had a crop of flax for its own domestic spinning. Cotton seems to have been grown quite extensively up the river as far north as Cass County before the big snow of the winter of 1830-31, which in the minds of the old settlers was responsible for a fundamental change in the climate making the growth of cotton no longer possible. However, today one occasionally finds in this latitude gardens adorned with a few plants of cotton.

The first attempt at intensification in early agriculture in the Illinois Valley was concerned with producing livestock for the eastern market. The abundance of free pasture made this more or less inevitable and long before the railroad had connected Illinois with the East, men were producing cattle in very large numbers for the Atlantic markets. One Cass County farmer had 700 head which he was making ready for market and which he started from the farm in lots of 100 at a time. Two men went out with each herd, one attempting usually to lead an animal while the other drove the herd. John A. Petefish is said to have led a steer from Virginia, Cass County, to Baltimore. Another prominent farmer of that neighborhood, John Prunty, produced meat animals for the eastern market in large numbers for which he raised hundreds of acres of corn. He was reputed to be the first in that part of Illinois to improve upon wild grass pasture by growing timothy. He created a great furor by installing stock scales. Previously it had been the custom to "guess off" the weight of cattle and hogs.

The second generation in the valley began to show their class consciousness in attempts to improve both farming and the farmer's lot. To this end agricultural societies became both common and popular. Through the inspiration of a very unusual agriculturist, Morris Birkbeck, the first agricultural society of the state was formed in 1819 with Birkbeck as president. Its life, however, was short and the funds accumulated in the first years' activities were turned over to the Rev. J. M. Peck, agent of the "Sunday School Association." More or less simultaneously with this, came an agricultural society in Madison County in

1822 which lived, however, only two years. Late in the 'Thirties, the Union Agricultural Society ministering to Lake, McHenry, Kane, Cook, Du Page, Will, and La Salle counties was organized. In its second year of existence it was responsible for putting out a farm paper known as the *Union Agriculturist and Western Farmer*. Perhaps stimulated by this activity in the northern counties, the state society was revived in 1841. The 'Forties and 'Fifties saw the spreading of this activity throughout the whole of the Illinois Valley. One of the earliest activities of these agricultural societies was the holding of county fairs. These organizations stimulated many new developments of agriculture such as poultry raising and horticulture, and reflect the great interest of the times in the breeding of better cattle, sheep, hogs and draft animals. In the 'Eighties, a craze for the trotting horse made its appearance and turned the old-time county fair into a sort of hybrid racing association.

One of these small agricultural societies had a prominent and abiding effect upon the life of the state. Buel Institute, the first agricultural society in the West, took in that part of La Salle County south of the river together with Marshall and Putnam counties. At first it met every three months at a different place and at these meetings members presented memoranda of their crops, yields, and general agricultural information. Beginning in 1848, it held fairs at Granville, Lowell, Hennepin, and Peru. A permanent location was secured at Hennepin in 1866 by the purchase of nineteen acres of land, situated on the bank of the Illinois and beautifully shaded by a young growth of forest trees. It was most admirably adapted in every way to the desired purpose. These grounds, an early historian says, "have been fitted up in the most attractive manner, every year adding some new improvement and furnishing, annually, fine exhibitions of the products of farms and homes. The present value of these grounds is \$3,000."

The leading minds of this organization set in operation the train of causes which produced the system of agricultural colleges throughout the United States. By invitation of Ralph Ware, Leonard Bullock, and others, Prof. J. B. Turner delivered an address at a convention of the Institute at Granville, in November, 1851, in the interest of agriculture and labor. Sixteen years later, at the inauguration of John M. Gregory, regent of Illinois Industrial University at Champaign, March 11, 1868, Dr. Newton Bateman then State Superintendent of Public Instruction, twice referred to that convention. "I observe," he said, "that the first tangible result of the widespread and extraordinary agitation of the subject of industrial university education which began with the Granville convention of 1851, and soon pervaded the whole state * * * was a memorial to the General Assembly of Illinois, praying that body to invoke the powerful aid and resources of the national government itself in furtherance of



A PIONEER ILLINOIS HOME

The newcomers one hundred years ago settled along the rivers and creeks, unable to break the prairie sod with their wooden mold-board plows.

the object. It will be seen therefore, that the seed-thought of these great agricultural institutions germinated in Granville, in the minds of the founders of Buel Institute, and the great thought which then sprang to life is destined to a wider realm than even our own broad land."

MODERN TRENDS IN FARMING

Colorful as this primitive agriculture was, no less interesting are the modern trends of the late decades of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth. A hundred years ago, nine-tenths of the population of the state were listed in the census as farmers. This number, however, by 1910 had dropped to less than one-fifth. While the first decade of the twentieth century showed not only a relative but an actual decrease in the numbers engaged in agriculture, the farming population of Illinois has always been "American," and this preponderance of native-born farmers has grown with the years until today nine-tenths of all Illinois farmers are of American extraction. This is partially due to the fact that the present demands of large capital investment prevent the newly arriving foreigner from engaging in agriculture.

Despite the fact that the percentage of the state's population engaged in farming has gradually dropped, nevertheless the production of cereals has constantly increased. Between 1840 and 1910, while the population of Illinois was increasing fourfold, the productions of the farmer were increased twentyfold due to improvement of tools, introduction of power machinery, agricultural skill, science, and business methods.

The statistics of crop production in Illinois reveal some very interesting phenomena. The number of dairy cows in the state increased steadily up to 1890, when Illinois ranked as third state in the Union. In spite of the tremendous demands of Chicago's population for milk, her rating has now fallen to fifth and the concentration of dairy cows is in the extreme northern portion of the state where the average farm shows three times as many dairy animals as in the central part. The proportion of horses to mules which in the northern counties stands thirty-seven to one, becomes ten to one in the central counties and drops to three to one in the south end of the state. Whereas 100 years ago the principal cereal raised in the state was wheat, today the center of the stage is taken by corn, Illinois' production of the same having surpassed that of all other states since 1860 except for the census year of 1890 which showed Illinois in second place. However, the proportion of corn which equals two-thirds of all cereals now grown in the state is constantly growing. The rapid increase in tenant farming has had much to do with the tendency to concentrate on raising corn. The cultivation of corn offers the "renter" his best opportunity.

Certain fundamental changes are taking place gradually in the valley. The number of farms is decreasing and has been since 1860. Side by side with it goes the increase in the size of the average farm. Differentiated farming demands too much capital and too long investments for the annual tenant.

THE MACHINE AGE OF AGRICULTURE

The century of farming in the Illinois Valley has seen marvelous changes but perhaps the greatest of all has been that due to the application of machinery to do the labor of the farm. As the early farmer encroached upon the prairie sections of the region an adequate plow became of vital importance. For hundreds of years men had used plows but throughout the centuries there had been little change in their form and efficiency, although the men of the Atlantic sea coast had spent considerable thought upon the evolution of a better tool. When the first American settlers entered the valley the plow was still a wooden tool with a metal cutting edge, and a wooden mold-board reinforced with iron strips. It was not before John Deere set up his little blacksmith shop at Grand Detour in 1837 and built therein a steel mold plow that the prairie farmer had an adequate tool for conquering the stubborn accumulation of grass roots. The success of Deere was attested by the fact that in the first twenty years in his primitive factory he turned out ten thousand plows. The chief defects of Deere's plows were overcome when Oliver, after the Civil war, produced a chilled-steel mold-board which scoured better in the trying clay soils of the valley. With the perfected plow it became easier to increase the acreage of crops planted.

Side by side with this went a series of improvements in the harvesting tools made necessary by increased production. A Cincinnati mechanic by the name of Hussey had patented a reaper in 1833 but moved away from his field of operations to Baltimore. Therefore his inventions had much less effect on farm life in the West than did that of an inventive genius in the Shenandoah Valley by the name of McCormick, who, the next year, patented a reaper and moved towards his field of future expansion by coming to Cincinnati where by 1845 he was producing 100 reapers a year. Sensing the strategy of the future, three years later, he moved his factory to Chicago thereby increasing his output by five-fold. Soon the reaper was transformed into the self-rake. By the early 'Seventies this in turn had been developed by McCormick into the self-binder using wire in tying bundles. The following year Deering offered an improvement by perfecting a knotter which used twine. The enthusiasm with which these labor-saving devices were seized upon by the farmers was indicated by the fall in prices of such machines. From 1860

to 1900 they fell on an average of almost one-half. Today nearly every process in which a farmer engages, from his early seeding at the close of winter until the final harvesting in the early winter months, is affected by power machinery. Much of it is propelled by the greatest of all the inventions which have affected the agricultural life of the state—the gasoline engine.

Contrary to the common conception that the principal inventions were the individual products of a particular man's genius, the opposite seems to be the truth. Almost every neighborhood in Illinois lays claim to having originated some one or more of the epoch-making agricultural inventions. Out of some rural blacksmith shop came contraptions designed to save the farmer effort in the planting, cultivating or harvesting of his principal crops. One today can discover many Illinois farmers who treasure the belief that an ancestor was the real inventor of the sulky plow, reaper, self-rake, corn planter, or hay rake, and by evil fortune alone was deprived of the undying fame and incidental wealth of an Avery or a McCormick.

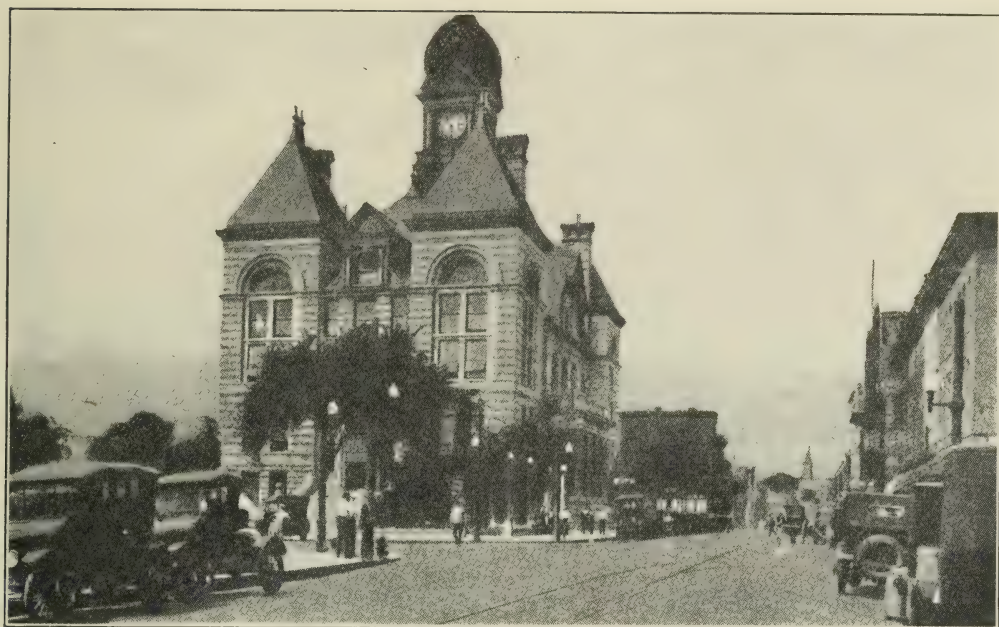
The simultaneous production of these inventions is well illustrated by the history of the reaper. Patented as late as 1833 or 1834, yet nine different reapers were entered at the Geneva [New York] fair's competition trials in 1852. In the early 'Fifties there might have been seen in Illinois a poor old man, a homeless wanderer known as Father Quincy. He had spent his life trying to invent a machine that would cut and bind corn stalks. He was regarded as a crank but recent times have seen his idea realized.

RECLAIMING FLOOD LANDS

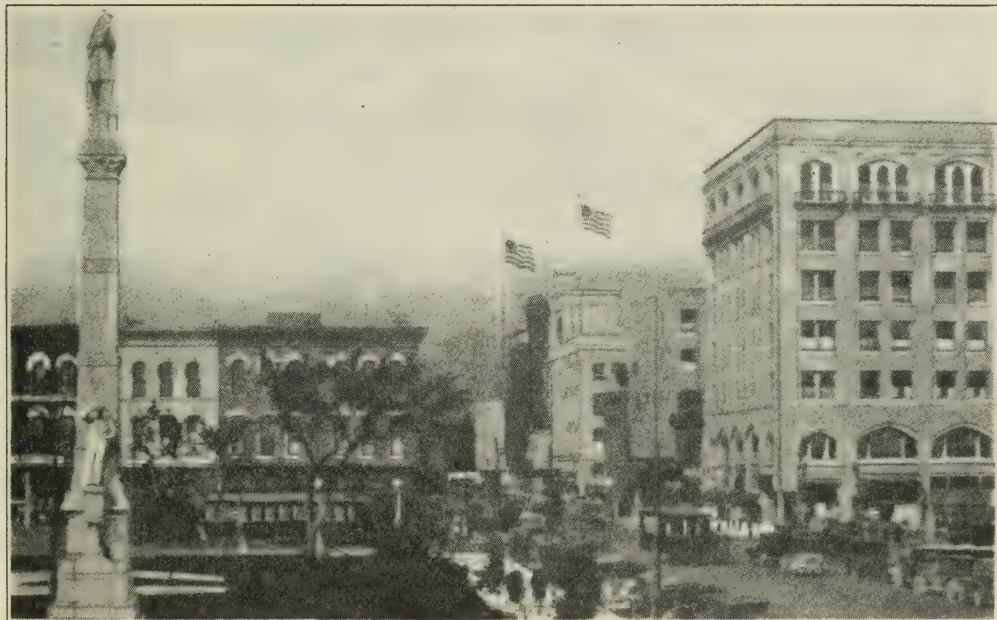
One of the principal agricultural developments in the Illinois Valley has been in the field of recapturing the overflow lands by drainage. As early as 1819 the State Legislature legalized a lottery authorized to raise \$50,000, under a board appointed by the Legislature to drain ponds in the American Bottom as a health measure. There were many counterparts of this in the experience of Virginia and Kentucky, undoubtedly familiar to the early settlers in Illinois. But the present-day drainage in the Illinois Valley has been for agricultural and not for health ends. In 1904 the Legislature set up a legal system for establishing drainage districts, the principal application of which has been in the valley of the Illinois which had an estimated overflow area of nearly one-third of a million acres—more than two-thirds of which lies within drainage projects today. While this development has reclaimed a great deal of highly productive land that formerly was waste, yet it has had some very disastrous results to those areas most concerned.

These overflow lands of the river from geologic times had served as a natural reservoir for flood water. It is interesting to see the effect of the development of river drainage projects upon this river course. In the upper regions of the valley from La Salle to Peoria only four per cent of the overflow land has been drained, while from Peoria to Havana, seventy-three per cent is in drainage projects, and from Beardstown to Grafton more than seventy-eight per cent lies behind levees.

That two-thirds of the old overflow reservoir has been reclaimed is serious enough. The danger is augmented by the fact that at certain points, the drainage districts lying on opposite sides of the river, which has been thereby confined to its narrow low water bed retard the flood waters. To this unnatural situation has been added the very large discharge of water from the Sanitary District of Lockport which continuing in flood times, constitutes a most serious menace to Illinois River bottom towns and farms. As the danger has increased it has been the practice of the drainage districts to lift their levee walls and thus make inevitable the overflowing on some other region. It seems necessary that either the levees must be set back from the river bank or else certain districts must be abandoned as reservoir resources if the disastrous floods of the Illinois Valley are to be avoided. Perhaps the deep water way development will necessitate a system of control dams, which would obviate this flood danger to the drainage lands of the valley.



WILL COUNTY COURTHOUSE, JOLIET



CHICAGO AND JEFFERSON STREETS, JOLIET

CHAPTER XXII

COAL MINING IN THE ILLINOIS VALLEY

GEOLOGY

The series of coal-bearing rocks known as the Pennsylvania system, commonly called the Coal Measures, has been sub-divided in Illinois into three formations. These divisions are believed to correspond in the main to subdivisions of the same system in the Appalachian region. In both regions the lowest formation is designated as the Pottsville formation. The formation above the Pottsville in Illinois is designated as the Carbondale, which in a general way corresponds to the Allegheny formation of Pennsylvania. The upper formation in Illinois, the McLeansboro, begins at about the same position as the Conemaugh formation of the East. Still higher formations are present in Pennsylvania, but it is unknown whether or not part of the Illinois McLeansboro corresponds in age to any of these higher formations of the eastern field. This three-fold subdivision must be considered as tentative, pending more detailed study.

The Pottsville formation includes No. 1 coal and all beds below No. 2 coal; the Carbondale formation begins at the base of No. 2 coal and extends through No. 5 coal to the top of No. 6 coal; the McLeansboro formation includes all beds above No. 6 coal. The No. 7 coal is the only important coal bed in this formation, and it lies near the base.

In northern Illinois, the Pottsville formation is commonly thin, ranging from a few inches to a hundred feet or so in thickness. The Carbondale formation outcrops in a narrow-belt parallel lying within the outcrop belt of the Pottsville formation in southern Illinois, but underlies considerably wider areas in northern and western Illinois. The formation ranges in thickness from about 120 feet in Fulton County to about 400 feet in Saline and Gallatin counties. The McLeansboro formation in most places overlies the Pottsville and Carbondale formations. The McLeansboro formation is relatively thick so that certain shafts, as at Lovington, have penetrated about 900 feet of strata before reaching coal thus far designated as the No. 6 seam. Most coal shafts in the state that extend to No. 6 coal have a depth of more than 200 feet, and outside of St. Clair, Williamson and possibly Perry counties, the depth is commonly greater than 300 feet.

In general, an important characteristic of the Illinois coal mines is the absence of structural irregularities. Faults do exist, but these do not seriously affect the cost and limit the possibilities of mining. The irregularities that most seriously affect the cost of mining are variances in the thickness of the beds and the character of the roof material. There are three important structural irregularities in the Illinois region—the La Salle Anticline, the Duquoin Anticline and the faulted belt across southern Illinois. The La Salle Anticline is the most important of these structures; it enters the coal basin from the northwest, east of the city of La Salle. This fold extends southeasterly, in varying prominence through Livingston, Ford, Champaign, Douglas, Coles, Clark, Crawford, and Lawrence counties. Along this line are located the producing oil fields of that area. This structure accounts for the lack of close association between the main Illinois field and the main Indiana field. Within recent years only one coal mining operation in the state has been located on the La Salle Anticline.

The Illinois River Valley region gives us ten seams of coal in a vertical thickness of about 600 feet, all of which have been identified in the immediate vicinity of the Illinois River except vein No. 4. Six of these seams average from two and a half feet to six feet in thickness, the others from a few inches to a few feet. All of the workable coal lies in the lower stratas. In 1929, coal for shipment by rail was taken from seams Nos. 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7; very little from Nos. 1 and 7, mostly from Nos. 5 and 6. Each seam has its own peculiar characteristics. As a rule any mine usually taps only one seam. From data procured on shipping mines for the year 1924, it was found that veins Nos. 2, 3, 5 and 6 supplied the bulk of the commercial coal, taken mostly from seams ranging from three and one-half to four feet nine inches in thickness. The figures differed little from those procured for 1929. Coal for shipping is being taken from depths ranging from sixty to 550 feet.

Practically all methods of mining are employed in the valley for raising the coal to the surface. In Bureau, Grundy, La Salle, Marshall, Putnam and Woodford counties shafts are used; Fulton has strip, shafts, slope, and drift mines; Peoria, slope, shaft, and drift mines; Tazewell, slope and shaft; Will, strip mines.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MINING

It is surprising, at first glance, that Illinois should have been the site where coal was first discovered, in face of the fact that the richest coal region in the world had to be traversed before Illinois could be reached, but when we consider that most of early travel was done along waterways, this is not so remarkable.

The first record of coal in America was made by Joliet and Marquette

in 1673 and was marked on Joliet's map as "Charbon de Terre." On Hennepin's map of 1689, a "cole mine" is shown on the Illinois River just above Fort Creve Coeur near the present site of Peoria. This region may have been near what is now La Salle or Ottawa. This "cole mine" was probably an outcrop of some vein lying near the surface. Outcrops are numerous in the Illinois River region.

As late as 1796, coal in great quantities was not known to exist nor was its use as fuel yet known. No mines were opened until after 1810. As early as 1818, the Illinois River Valley and St. Clair County were the most widely known coal-producing regions in Illinois. Many thousands of bushels were mined and sent to St. Louis annually, and sold at the rate of ten to twelve and one-half cents a bushel. (The exact quantity sent to St. Louis from the two regions is not known since the statistical record of that period is very vague).

Early in the history of the United States, a belief prevailed that it would be a long time before the prairie country such as is found in the northern portion of Illinois would be settled because wood was scarce and coal was slow to take its place as a substitute. However, as the use of coal gathered momentum, it became a stimulus for settlement of these lands. Foreign farmers began to prefer the prairie regions of northern Illinois because they could avoid having to clear land and could raise a crop the first year while coal would serve as fuel. Thus, we see in a very short period farmers leaving or avoiding the banks of the rivers, then the fringes of the timbers, and settling in the wide-open regions. The abundance of coal in the Illinois River region was used as an incentive to lure settlers west and was played up by writers at every opportunity.

In Bureau County, one of the heavy producing counties of that early period, coal was first discovered in the fall of 1834, outcropping from the banks of Coal Creek in Mineral township. Two years afterward it was found on Negro Creek in the town of Hall and on Coal Run in Indian-town. The first large vein of coal in the region was struck during excavations of the Illinois-Michigan Canal just a few miles below Ottawa in 1837. It was several feet thick and apparently exhaustless.

Little was known at first about the commercial value of coal and its use for driving industries. There was a lack of faith in the new commodity. Wood was orthodox as fuel, and waterpower continued to be used to drive the wheels of mills. A few of the early historians dared to prophesy that steam mills would become numerous in this region of the state, simply because of the abundance of coal which would offset the lack of advantageous and accessible waterfalls, but their prophecies were on the whole looked upon with considerable skepticism by the hesitant settlers. It was not until the '50s that the commercial possibilities of coal began to be realized.

The rich deposits of coal about La Salle and Peru were responsible for the growth of these cities as manufacturing centers, giving impetus particularly to the zinc and glass industries. At La Salle the early mines were worked by "drifts," i. e., by starting at the outcrop and working inward. In 1857, coal mined in that region was used to supply Ottawa, La Salle, and Peru, and what was left was shipped to Chicago and St. Louis. There were then about twenty mines in the La Salle basin employing over 300 men and producing 600 tons a week; 450 tons were sent out over the Illinois Central Railroad, while the rest was sold at home at \$4.50 a ton or delivered to the Chicago market at \$5 a ton. In 1876 more than 300,000 tons were raised annually in and about La Salle and Peru. Streator also shipped a similar amount annually. This and the fact that steamboats from the Mississippi River met the canal boats from Chicago at La Salle and Peru enabled these cities to attain a prominent rank as industrial cities.

Mining in the early '50s is found to have borne a close relation to the development of the transportation systems of the state. As the C. B. & Q. and the Rock Island railroads were extended across Grundy, La Salle, and Bureau counties, mining enterprises were inaugurated by means of shafts sunk in the prairies adjacent to the lines. Mines, for example, were opened at Sheffield, Bureau County, in 1855 to serve the C. B. & Q. In a short time this developed into one of the most prosperous of the earlier coal-producing centers.

Steamboats gradually took to using coal instead of wood as fuel. Thus for many years coal was mined in the vicinity of Pleasant View, Schuyler County, to supply steamboats at Frederick, a point four miles distant, on the Illinois River. It was first worked by tunneling into the hill where the coal outcrops on the banks of a small stream running into Sugar Creek.

Extensive mining for local demand was in evidence in Fulton County during the late '50s. Cuba was supplying coal to the Toledo, Peoria & Western Railroad in 1859. It was hauled from the mines in small horse-drawn cars on rails to the station. At Avon, in 1859, a seam of cannel coal was extensively worked for the distillation of coal oil. Ten retorts were in operation at this locality, producing approximately thirty gallons from a ton of coal. However, the rapid development of the Pennsylvania oil fields put an end to this business, causing the mines to be abandoned.

Before 1857, firewood and coal were the most expensive articles in Chicago. Owing, however, to the rapid growth in the development of the upper Illinois coal beds, this condition was rapidly disappearing, especially since new mines were being constantly opened. In 1855, 110,075 tons of coal were imported into Chicago as compared to 56,768 tons the year before.

Up until 1857 the upper Illinois mines had been very imperfectly worked chiefly through ignorance of the fact that the quality of coal improved as the deposits were removed from a greater depth, since with depth the thickness increased. Up until this time coal had been worked extensively at the outcrops only, which was of a much inferior quality to that brought to the Chicago markets from the Ohio and Pennsylvania fields which were also competing for this lucrative market.

Up to about 1860, coal mining in Illinois was confined to the Illinois River region and to Madison and St. Clair counties, La Salle, Grundy, Peoria, and Fulton counties being the largest producers in the river region. A county, however, not to be overlooked is Will County. The coal from this region was carted directly to Chicago from the mines for immediate use. Although its heating power was less than that in the same weight of the eastern coals, it made a good steam coal and was invaluable as a locomotive fuel in this treeless country. Will County produced 228,000 tons for the Chicago market in 1870.

Between 1850 and 1865, 192,975 tons of coal were transported on the Illinois and Michigan Canal. It had been expected that the opening of this waterway in 1848 would lead to a large development in coal mining along the Illinois River Valley, but lack of railroad facilities to bring coal to the canal and the competition of eastern coal, mainly from Pennsylvania, due to its superior quality and cheap lake transportation, tended to stifle whatever impetus the canal gave.

DECLINE OF COAL PRODUCTION IN THE VALLEY

Accurate statistical data on the coal output is unavailable before 1882. Up until this time we have as references only the estimates compiled by one individual or another and census figures on the number of mines. Beginning with 1882 the state legislature created a board which since has functioned in a very efficient fashion in compiling data on every phase of the coal industry.

In 1840 there were six counties producing coal in the Illinois Valley, employing 137 men and producing 2,515 tons with an invested capital estimated at \$4,140. In 1850 there still was no mine in Illinois whose annual product exceeded \$500. In 1860 there were six coal producing counties which had twenty-one mines, employing 470 men, producing 275,245 tons and having a value of \$485,701. By 1870 Illinois had 322 mines employing 6,300 men, having an invested capital of \$4,286,575, and producing coal valued at \$6,097,432. Of this total, there were in the Illinois Valley eighty-one mines, employing 2,110 men, having an invested capital of \$1,740,000 and producing coal valued at \$1,545,431, or in other words practically one-third of the total in the state.

From 1882 down to the present, leadership in coal production has

gradually moved from the northern to the southern field. La Salle and Bureau counties were for a time the leading producers in the state, representing the Illinois Valley region. Then Sangamon County followed by St. Clair took the reins and led until the World war period when leadership passed into the hands of the counties in the extreme southern portion where it will probably remain for the next decade.

The percentage of output by each section during each decade from 1882 to 1929 is shown in the following table:

Section	1882-1892	1893-1902	1903-12	1913-22	1923-29
Northern -----	41.7	32.7	21.2	11.9	9
Central -----	29.3	34.1	32.6	31.3	31.4
Southern -----	29.0	33.2	46.2	56.8	59.6

Plenty of timber for fuel and ignorance of the true worth of coal for fuel purposes were more responsible than anything else for preventing the southern field from coming into prominence sooner than it did. Practically the sole use of the coal mined in southern counties in early times was for blacksmithing.

Quite the opposite was the case in the northern region. There a decided shortage of timber made it imperative that a substitute be found. Coal was plentiful on every hand and fitted in perfectly with the needs of the inhabitants.

By dividing the state into four coal-producing regions—northern, Illinois Valley, central and southern—and by tabulating the production of each region from year to year, it will be seen that up to the year 1882, the Illinois Valley was supreme. In 1884, central Illinois, comprising the area south of the Illinois Valley region and extending to a line drawn eastward from the southern boundary of St. Clair County, surpassed the valley in production and maintained its leadership until 1908, when the southern field took command. Central Illinois led again in 1912, but from that time on the southern region has never been surpassed. It was not, however, until 1898 that southern Illinois surpassed the Illinois Valley in the matter of production.

The World war gave renewed impetus to coal production in the southern region, permitting the mines to operate at full capacity. The advantage of a superior quality of coal will make it a leader for a long time to come.

From 1888, the capacity of existing mines in this state has always been in excess of any demand yet made upon them, and there is every present prospect that this disparity will be maintained, as the development of new mines keeps apace with any increase which may be anticipated in the demand.

Machinery started its inroads in the coal industry of the valley in

1890, first appearing in the La Salle and Streator areas. The same year also marked the first time in the history of the state that an increase in coal production was not responsible for a proportional increase in the number of employes. There was a decrease of 5 per cent in the number of men and a 9 per cent increase in production. Machinery is responsible for this result.

Noting the decline in each region, it will be seen that an increase in one region is followed by a similar movement in another and vice versa. Changing economic conditions are responsible for these increases and declines. Labor difficulties have a similar effect. Strikes in one area are usually followed by strikes in the others since practically the whole field is unionized.

Coal mining in its infancy was carried on by farmers. The fact was that the only miner who was successful was the one who did farming on the side. However, that situation did not long exist in the valley. Mining by 1896 had assumed giant proportions. Out of forty-five mines producing over 200,000 tons per annum, twenty of them were located in the counties of the Illinois Valley—six in Grundy, six in La Salle, five in Bureau, one in Marshall, one in Woodford, and one in Fulton County.

The output of coal in Illinois more than doubled in the decade 1895-1905 and in the year 1908 had a value of nearly \$50,000,000. Four counties bordering on the middle Illinois River—Bureau, Peoria, Marshall and Tazewell—furnished about one-twelfth of the total. Since that date Fulton County, contiguous with this territory, has swelled the total.

Coal production reached its peak in the valley region in 1912 when over 9,500,000 tons were produced, giving employment to over 18,500 men.

The eight-year period from 1921 to 1929 shows that a far larger number of mines are being abandoned than are being opened in the Illinois Valley. Following is a record of mines opened and abandoned during those eight years:

<i>County</i>	<i>Mines Opened</i>	<i>Abandoned</i>
Bureau -----	1	5
Grundy -----	1	2
La Salle -----	--	6
Putnam -----	--	2
Will -----	1	1
Peoria -----	2	8
Marshall -----	--	3
Tazewell -----	--	3
Fulton -----	7	26
	—	—
Totals -----	12	56

THE COAL INDUSTRY AND PEORIA

Peoria, in addition to being ideally located as a city with convenient transportation facilities, has the added advantage of being in the heart of a rich coal-producing area. During the period of industrial development, coal was brought to Peoria in wagons and sold at seven to eight cents a bushel, or about \$1.50 to \$2 a ton. It was claimed that coal could be marketed cheaper at Peoria than any other place in the state.

Coal had its place in Peoria from an early date. It was discovered in the vicinity of Peoria Lake in 1673. It was used for fuel the following century by soldiers stationed at Fort Clark on the banks of the Kickapoo Creek where it was mined along outcrops in small ravines about ten to fourteen feet below the surface. As early as 1837 it was hauled in to Peoria by wagons from places from one to three miles distant and sold for fuel. At that time it sold for twelve cents a bushel.

Coal about Peoria at first was considered of little or no commercial value since industries were not at all developed. This may be attributed to the slow growth of population up until the coming of the canal. In 1829 there was not a town above Peoria. The population of Peoria in 1833 numbered twenty-five families. As late as 1850, the aggregate population of the inland towns of the six middle Illinois Valley counties—Peoria, Tazewell, Putnam, Bureau, Woodford, and Marshall—was less than 3,000 or about thirty-one per cent of that of the towns located on the river. Consequently there was not enough centralization for extensive growth of industry and coal was used for fuel purposes only.

Ballance in his "History of Peoria" notes that coal was only a minor factor in the growth of Peoria. In view of this opinion a considerable trade in it had been established. The first shipment by river appears to have been in 1821, when a boatload was sent from Peoria to St. Louis. By 1851 it was the first article of home production of which great quantities were being sent to Chicago by canal boats. The record of the clerk of the city showed that from January 1, 1850, to March 1, 1851, 4,349 boatloads or about 147,866 bushels selling at seven cents a bushel (20,580 tons at \$2.50 a ton) had been sent to Chicago.

By 1851, coal was used extensively in the following industries: foundries, casting shops, steam-power turning, cabinet shops, machine shops and steam hay presses. Coal came into use for street lighting in 1853; it was used to produce the gas.

The distilling industry began in Peoria in 1840. In 1864, there were no less than twelve distilleries within the city and several others in the vicinity. These distilleries produced 3,800 gallons of whiskey daily and

used 10,500 bushels of grain and 5,250 bushels of coal a day. Coal was used in this industry from 1844 onward. By 1870, 360 tons of coal were consumed in the foundries daily.

Thus it can readily be seen that the contribution of coal to the growth of Peoria is immeasurable both in the past and the bright future ahead of it.

CHAPTER XXIII

MANUFACTURING IN THE VALLEY

The now industrial state of Illinois had at its entrance into the Union only the miniature form of a manufacturing system. The physical and political conditions of the Illinois Country were not such as to encourage extensive manufacturing. The country was newly settled. Political control had been uncertain. The English, after the nominal evacuation of the French in 1763, had had little time, in the interval before the Revolution, to encourage settlement of their western territory. In fact, they had definitely discouraged it. There was always the Indian menace, and adequate protection of settlers was difficult. After the War for Independence, settlers began to pour into the western country; and after passing through the stages of territorial government, Illinois in 1818 was admitted to the Union. Her industrial inheritance was small.

A few of the French mills remained * * * dilapidated reminders of a comparatively flourishing civilization. Most of the French villages, especially those along the rivers, had been possessors of wind, water, and horse mills. The mills had been used to manufacture flour, not only for the inhabitants of the village but for exportation to Mobile and New Orleans. Inasmuch as the Jesuit missionaries were the chief proponents of this industry, the milling industry gradually declined after the French defeat in 1763. But the ruins of mills remained to challenge the pioneers to new activity.

The Indian tribes of the Illinois Country were quite proficient in certain industries. They were admirable tanners and the central Algonquian tribes developed a unique system of weaving by twisting the inner bark of the linden. The bags which they thus wove were decorated with various geometric designs and by figures of animals. A definite attempt to "encourage and gradually introduce the art of husbandry and domestic manufactures" among the Indians was made with the establishment of Indian trading factories. Such a factory was started in Chicago in 1805 and continued until 1812. This activity had little or no influence, however, and Indian manufactures were little utilized outside of the Indian villages.

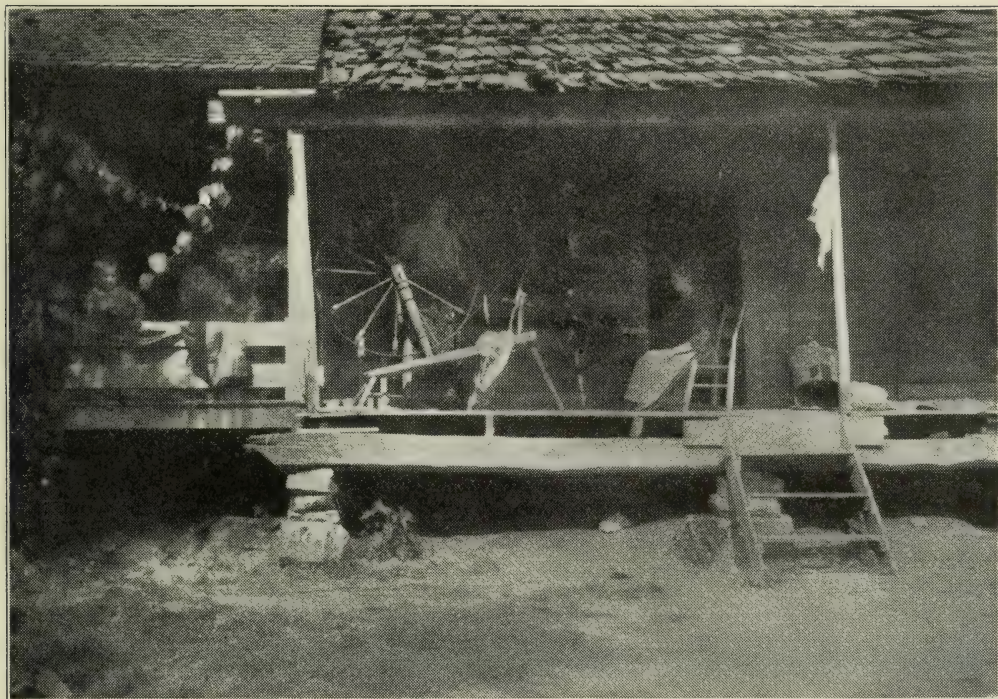
Most of the manufactured goods in territorial Illinois were used entirely within the territory. The round trip to New Orleans usually took over six months and the return trip was especially slow and arduous. Any

trading that took place was mostly importing. Exports were practically unknown. Illinois manufacturing as listed in the marshal's returns for 1810 include:

<i>Articles</i>	<i>Value</i>
1. Spinning wheels -----	\$ 630
2. Looms, 460, cloth produced, 90,039 yards -----	54,028
3. Tanneries, 9 leather dressed -----	7,750
4. Distilleries, 10,200 gallons -----	7,500
5. Flour, 6,440 barrels -----	32,200
6. Maple Sugar, 15,600 -----	1,980
	<hr/>
	\$104,088

With the exception of a few industries, whose products were used almost entirely for home consumption, the state in its early decades was definitely agricultural. The pioneer was compelled to be a "jack of all trades." He was often at once a farmer, tanner, cooper, shoemaker, mechanic and miller. To the specialized age of today, his versatility and adaptability is amazing. Thomas Ford in his "History of Illinois," published in 1854, relates the following anecdote "as an example of the talents of this people to supply all deficiencies, and provide against accidents by a ready invention." The story concerns one James Lemon, one of the old school of Baptist preachers: "Mr. Lemon was a farmer and made all his own harness. The collars for his horse were made of straw or corn husks, plaited and sewed together by himself. Being engaged in breaking a piece of stubble ground, and having turned out for dinner, he left his harness on the beam of his plow. His son, a wild youth, who was employed with a pitchfork to clear the plow of the accumulating stubble, staid behind, and hid one of the horse collars. This he did that he might rest while his father made a new collar. But the old man, returning in the afternoon and missing his collar, mused a few minutes and then, very much to the disappointment of his truant son, he deliberately pulled off his leather breeches, stuffed the legs of them with stubble, straddled them across the neck of his horse for a collar, and plowed the remainder of the day as bare-legged as he came into the world." Mr. Ford adds the following comment: "In a more civilized country, where the people are better acquainted with the great laws which control the division of labor, a half day would have been lost in providing for such a mishap."

This widespread agricultural life does not mean that towns were entirely without professional activity. A Kaskaskia weekly newspaper in 1818 contained advertisements of nine general stores, an establishment for the manufacture and sale of hats, and three tailor shops. Ambitious town promoters offered inducements to skilled workmen to settle in their



A PIONEER INDUSTRY
Domestic Science in the early years of Illinois statehood.

communities. Advertisements in various newspapers show that some, at least, responded for many are the coöperative shops, tanneries, etc., that are advertised. But there is also evidence that the economic status of such shops was not always flourishing. The *Illinois Gazette* in 1820 complained that high rents had driven the merchants from Shawneetown.

THE OLD-TIME MILL

Promising messengers of a potential manufacturing state were the mills which dotted the country. The grandfather of the mill was a small home-made tin device used to grate corn. Tin articles of all kinds were cherished by the pioneer and when they had outlived their original purpose they were torn into pieces of suitable size, punched with holes and nailed rough side up to boards. Over this the corn was rubbed into meal.

Soon the time came when grating corn on a tin block was too slow. Horse or band mills came next. They began to spring up in the valley around 1820. Such machines consisted primarily of two large millstones, the upper of which was made to revolve on the lower. The first mill in the vicinity of Hennepin, started by Thomas Gallagher, Sr., in 1826, was typical. A log house was built, sixteen feet square, and outside a shaft was set up, with holes in which arms were mortised. A rawhide band was then stretched around these, connecting the shaft with the upper stone. Two or four horses hitched to a projecting arm turned the device as they went around and around in a circle. The millstones were formed from dark granite boulders known as "nigger heads" upon which the builder "exhausted a large stock of patience" in dressing down. Later Gallagher rigged his mill up with a cog wheel gearing to transmit power to the mill wheels and greatly accelerated the speed. But in the near-by community of Magnolia, the Hollenbeck mill at first used only hand power and "the customer contributed his strength while his grist was ground." Major Gershom Patterson used cattle to propel the first grist mill in Jerseyville.

These mills were often located at inconveniently long distances from each other. Some farmers drove from forty to sixty miles to Hobart's mill in Schuyler County. These journeys were frequently difficult. Judge Lewison Solomon of Morgan County gives an account of the difficulties his family endured in 1824 to carry grain two days to mill. Sometimes they ran entirely out of provisions and almost starved. They were annoyed by everything, ranging from flies to wolves and panthers. In some cases the journey took three days—one to get there, one in "waiting one's turn," and another in getting back home. Waiting one's turn was an arduous undertaking. Because the mills were far apart, a great many people had to use them, and thus long waits were necessitated. It was not infrequently

that the pioneer was forced to use his grain for food and because of this went home without the flour and meal he had hoped to have. Yet, on the contrary, many of these trips were joyful occasions. The men of the family, to whom the task of going to mill was given, liked the chance to get out in the open. They enjoyed the open fire, the impromptu cooking, and the hearty fellowship of camp life. The pioneer knew how to enjoy himself simply—and he made use of every opportunity.

As settlements grew and their needs increased, energetic men began looking around for sites on rivers and creeks where waterpower could be utilized for milling. J. H. Colton in his "Traveller's Directory for Illinois" (1840) advised prospective emigrants that "probably in no part of the great West does there exist the capability of such an immense waterpower as is to be found naturally, and which will be created artificially along the rapids of the Illinois and Fox rivers, and the Illinois and Michigan Canal." When Ames Leonard built his mill on East Bureau Creek, in Bureau County, in 1830, it was the first one to use waterpower north of Peoria. Its stones were made out of boulders from the near-by bluffs and the hoop they ran in was a section of a hollow sycamore tree. Spring Bay township, in Woodford County, had nothing but a crude mill called the "Corn Cracker" until Crocker's Mill was built in 1833-34 and started drawing its power from the several springs of the neighborhood from which the town received its name. An early mill in Greene County derived its power from Apple Creek by means of "a clumsy but picturesque tub wheel" and a dam with a width of 130 feet and a fall of six.

Steam came into use as power about the same time. The Western Guide Book estimated the cost of a good steam mill at \$1,500, and a steam flour mill, having three runs of stones, elevators, etc., at from \$3,500 to \$5,000. Steam often was used when a waterpower site was not accessible, or to supplement waterpower at times when the water supply was low.

Most of the early neighborhood grain mills confined their activities to grinding corn. The finer process of making flour was left to other mills which, because of the cost and intricacy of their machinery, were fewer and farther apart. A Putnam County historian records that prior to 1830 there were no flouring mills closer than Salt Creek in Sangamon County. But in 1835, two enterprising partners from Cincinnati came to Columbia (changed the next year to Lacon) and started the most advanced milling enterprise this part of the valley had known to date. They shipped machinery from Cincinnati and, upon lots donated by the town, built their mill which, from the time it began operations in the fall of 1836 until it was razed by fire many years later, had a vital part in the business of the community. So important was this as a milling center that when Galena experienced a shortage of flour in 1839-40, a large shipment was sent there from Lacon by wagon.

About the same time the flour mill was established at Lacon, two steam sawmills were started in or near the town. The settlers were beginning to desire more refined dwellings than their first rough log houses and sawmills became quite as important as those grinding grain. In fact, as early as 1821, a rude sawmill was started in Bluffdale township, Greene County, even before a grist mill, in order to make lumber with which to build the latter. Sawmilling was quite profitable. Timber sometimes was sawed on the shares, one-half the lumber being given in payment for the work. Otherwise, a fee was charged. Early records show the charges ranging from \$1.75 a 100 feet for oak planks of one inch to \$3 for scarcer woods such as walnut or curly maple. Often the same miller who ground people's grain also sawed their timber.

A few textile mills appeared in the valley during the 'Thirties and 'Forties. Originally, the individual families had done their own spinning and weaving. Then, as the frontier communities gradually became more complex and the interdependence of one trade upon another began to assert itself, community mills were set up where wool could be taken to be prepared and carded for the loom, and a few where cloth was woven. The first wool-carding mill north of the Illinois was established in Rushville in 1831. Machinery was brought from Kentucky and horses on a treadmill furnished the motive power. Dennis Barney started out with a sawmill at Lacon in 1835 but soon he added a wool-carding and fulling machine. The settlers had taken extensively to the raising of sheep and Barney's venture grew to such a degree that he had to erect a three-story building for his wool-carding mill. It thrived until it was destroyed by fire in 1843. A Kentuckian named Capps started a woolen mill at Jacksonville in 1838 and it continued to operate for many years. There was also some activity with cotton in Illinois during this period. Colton in 1840 wrote: "A few factories for spinning cotton goods have been put into operation in several counties on a small scale of from 100 to 200 spindles each. They are carried on by animal power on the inclined plane. Coarse clothing from cotton is manufactured in the southern portion of the state, where the article is raised in small quantities."

Still another branch of milling was the manufacture of castor oil, used in those days not only for medicinal purposes but also for lubricating oil. This activity was confined largely to the lower part of the state and valley. We find the record of an old mill at Greenfield, Greene County, originally operated by oxen on an inclined plane, which first was used to grind corn, then as a wool-carding machine, and finally for making castor oil. Rushville's pioneer carding mill tried for a while to operate a flax seed crusher but this proved unprofitable.

Towns were frequently built up around early mill sites. The migration of settlers always tended to follow the streams and rivers, and the

mills served as nuclei of activity. A village grew up around Leeper's Mill in Bureau County, but when the mill burned down in 1838, Leepertown, as the settlement was known, promptly started to decline. Bernadotte in Fulton County is a good example of the old mill town. Its mill on the Spoon River was a landmark for many decades.

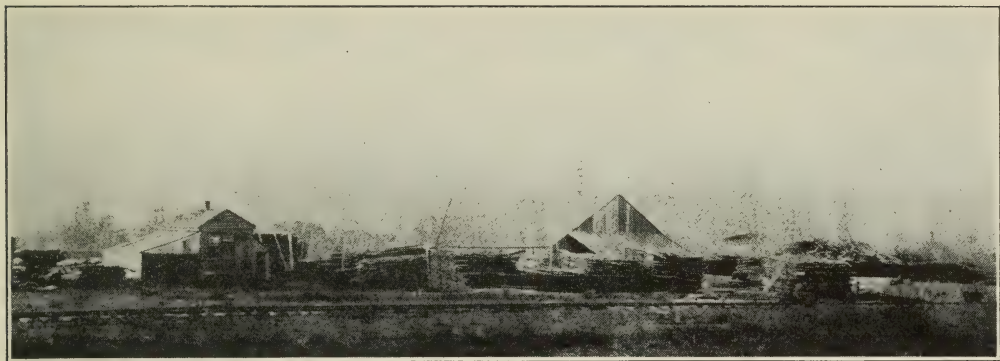
The miller was usually the most important man in the community, for even to be the owner of a mill required wealth. There is the poem which illustrates the standing of the miller's family. It begins:

"My mother was for women's rights,

And my father was the rich miller of London Mills."

So important was milling in this early period that special legislation was passed to aid and regulate it. An act of the Legislature which went into effect in 1827 provided that "any person desirous of obtaining land whereon to build a mill might obtain this land by making proper application for it. Should this mill cause any damage, the owner was required to make reparations. The mill, petitioned for, must have been completed within three years or the land was to revert back to the original owner. The act defined public mills as "all mills now in operation in this state, for grinding wheat, rye, corn, or other grain, and which shall grind for toll." Every mill owner was required to grind the grain brought to his mill and the toll for such service was prescribed as follows: For grinding or bolting wheat or rye, one-eighth part; for grinding Indian corn, oats, barley, and buckwheat, not required to be bolted, one-seventh part; for grinding malt and chopping all kinds of grain, one-eighth part. For an ox or a horse mill, for grinding and bolting wheat or rye into flour, one-fourth part; for grinding all other grain, one-fourth part, in full of all compensation. The miller was further required to keep his mill in good repair and assist in loading and unloading all grain brought to him. He was also required to keep an accurate half-bushel measure and a set of toll dishes or scales to weigh the grain. He was to be further penalized the sum of \$5.00 if he overcharged his customers.

Besides the various forms of milling several other manufacturing activities contributed to the life of the pioneer settlements. The tannery business was profitable in early days. One of the most important tanyards of the valley was in Cass County, of which the following is a description by James Cunningham, a son of the original owner: "The tanyard was in operation about 1837, or as soon thereafter as the plant could be assembled and put into operation. It consisted in part of a frame building of six rooms on the ground floor and two upstairs rooms; and an outside room for footwear, and harness, whips and saddles. * * * Then there was the bark shed and bark mill. The bark shed was about 40 x 50 feet with the same slope roof as the slope of the hillside. The bark mill was



A COOPERAGE PLANT AT BEARDSTOWN
One of the early principal industries of the lower Illinois Valley



THE OLD BERNADOTTE MILL ON THE SPOON RIVER IN FULTON COUNTY
Nearly a century ago this mill ground grain for farmers within a radius of
seventy-five miles

round and about twenty feet in diameter. The ground floor contained in part twenty-four pits 4 x 4½ feet. Some were larger and called the 'water hole' where the hides were soaked and softened. The flesh was then scraped off; next put into the 'lime pit,' where the hair was loosened, and when the hair was scraped off the hides were passed on the 'bates.' Oh my, it was a test of valor to stand a minute or two and sniff at the 'bates.' The skins and heavy hides when cleaned were now ready for the tanning proper. The sheep and calf and deer skins would be ready for use by fall or winter. Other hides according to weight would be finished out in the winter or maybe would remain a part of the next summer in the tan liquor. * * * Most of the leather was sold at home, but often a lot would go to Beardstown to Chase, or Rich & Parker, or others of the long-ago merchants of that town. It was quite common for buyers to come from Bath, Jacksonville and occasionally from Petersburg or Springfield."

In every village of any size at all, there was always at least one blacksmith shop. The blacksmith was of necessity often a gunsmith as well. As soon as the population increased to such an extent as to warrant it, the gunsmith became a separate mechanic. The early blacksmith shops were picturesque places, with their clanging anvils and groups of men who theoretically settled the affairs of the nation.

The pioneers had brought little if any furniture to their settlements. Soon the more prosperous ones grew dissatisfied with the crude furniture of their own make, and began to want "store-made" pieces. Importing such articles was difficult and costly, so small furniture factories were begun in most of the towns. Such a shop was William Schneider's chair factory, established in Rushville in 1830. The Schneider chairs were of the split-bottom, hickory kind, but when bedecked with white enamel and velvet cushions were fit for a place of honor in the front parlor.

Virtually every county and town had its carpenters, wagon makers, cabinetmakers, blacksmiths, tanners, and millers. Jacksonville, which in the 'Thirties was a typical "large town" of the valley, was quite industrial. Mr. Peck in 1834 classifies it thus: "Jacksonville has sixteen stores, six groceries, two druggist shops, two taverns or hotels, several respectable boarding houses, one baker, two saddlers, three hatters, one silversmith, one watchmaker, two tanners, three cabinetmakers, one machinist, one house and sign painter, six tailors, two cord-wainers, four blacksmiths, three chair makers, one coach maker, one wagon maker, one wheelwright, eleven lawyers, and ten physicians. It has one steam flour mill and one sawmill, a manufactory for cotton yarns, a distillery, two oil mills, two carding factories, a tannery, and three brickyards, with a proportion of various mechanics in the building line and other trades. Pekin, which in 1837 contained about 800 people, illustrates the industrial

interests of a typical small town of the period. In 1837 it had two slaughtering and packing houses, a steam flouring mill, a steam sawmill, and two steam distilleries."

PORK PACKING AND WHISKEY

Up until 1840, manufacturing in the valley had been principally for home use. What exporting had been done was confined almost entirely to the shipping of farm produce, flour, meal and some lumber by steamboat to the St. Louis and New Orleans markets. The succeeding decades, however, developed industries that reached out definitely for outside markets. One of these was pork packing. Long before Chicago attained her position as the packing center of the nation, many towns along the Illinois River were doing a thriving trade in this business. At Lacon, for instance, Jabez Fisher erected a slaughter-house in 1840, and by the end of ten years had what was claimed to be the most complete meat-packing plant in the West. Hogs were driven to it from eleven counties and cargo after cargo of pork was shipped by steamboat to New Orleans. From 40,000 to 75,000 hogs were slaughtered annually in Cass County, and at one time Pike County had no less than fifteen packing plants.

At the same time, the distilling industry was being developed in the valley. The distilleries at first were of a local nature, many of them operated in connection with mills, probably using corn and other grains of a grade not suitable for milling purposes. The Rev. Mr. Peck listed 142 distilleries in his *Gazetteer of Illinois* in 1834, but he voiced more of an inspired hope than sound prophecy when he stated: "There has been a considerable falling off in the manufacture of whiskey within a few years and it is sincerely hoped by thousands of citizens that this branch of business, so decidedly injurious to the morals and happiness of community and individuals, will entirely decline." Regardless of the injury to "morals and happiness" cited by Mr. Peck, the distillery solved the farmer's problem of marketing surplus corn. As has already been noted, Pekin had two steam distilleries in 1837, and there were whiskey plants in other towns of the valley at the beginning of the fourth decade. Peoria, however, soon became the center of the distilling business. She possessed the advantage of being centrally located in the center of a great corn-producing area. It was not until 1844, however, that the first steam distillery was put into operation there. Public lecturers and temperance society leaders had done much preaching to render the whiskey business unpopular. Men had been loath to branch out into a line that was the subject of so much controversy. Popular prediction was that the founder of the first big distillery in Peoria was certainly to go bankrupt. Great was the surprise when he actually made money with his enterprise. Peoria

was exporting 4,500 barrels of whiskey in 1847, and 5,685 barrels in 1850. By the time of the Civil war, distilling had become the city's leading industry. In 1864, there were twelve distilleries in Peoria and several others in the immediate vicinity, using upwards of 10,000 bushels of corn a day. Thousands of hogs and cattle were fattened on the mash, giving Peoria added importance as a packing center.

With the development of meat packing and distilling in the 'Forties and 'Fifties, cooperage shops became abundant, especially in towns near wooded tracts along the river. Perry Toole, a pioneer cooper of Schuyler County, said that during the halcyon days of the cooper from 1844 to 1852 there were 500 cooper shops in his county with an average of three men to every shop. It was a paying trade, too. A whiskey barrel that sold for \$1.25 netted the cooper 62½ cents and a good man could make four or five a day. White oak timber was used for pork and whiskey barrels, and red and black oak for the others.

AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS

All the while, Illinois was steadily developing as a farming state, and it was natural that the manufacture of agricultural implements should become one of her foremost industries. At first, what tools the farmer needed he made himself or had made by the village blacksmith. Then came small factories to supply the local needs. By the late 'Forties, most towns of any consequence had their wagon shops and the larger cities their buggy and carriage factories. Plow factories developed in the same way. James Ramage of Magnolia, for instance, worked out an idea in 1841 for a plow that would scour itself and turn the soil smoothly and neatly. For a number of years he manufactured this implement for the farmers of the neighborhood, until larger factories with better facilities took his trade away. William Parlin's efforts resulted more successfully. He came to Canton from his native state of Massachusetts in 1840, and started a little shop and made plows and other farm implements. He was the first to produce a plow bottom entirely of steel, replacing wooden mold-boards. He originated the disk harrow, and he led to the manufacture of the double plow. Parlin's brother-in-law, William T. Orendorff, joined him in the business in 1852 and the firm of Parlin & Orendorff resulted. In later years, the P. & O. works at Canton became a unit of the great International Harvester Company. Pekin and Peoria early became centers for the manufacture of farm equipment. Before 1859, Peoria was turning out 10,000 plows a year. The Joliet Manufacturing Company also was active in the production of plows and cultivators prior to the Civil war.

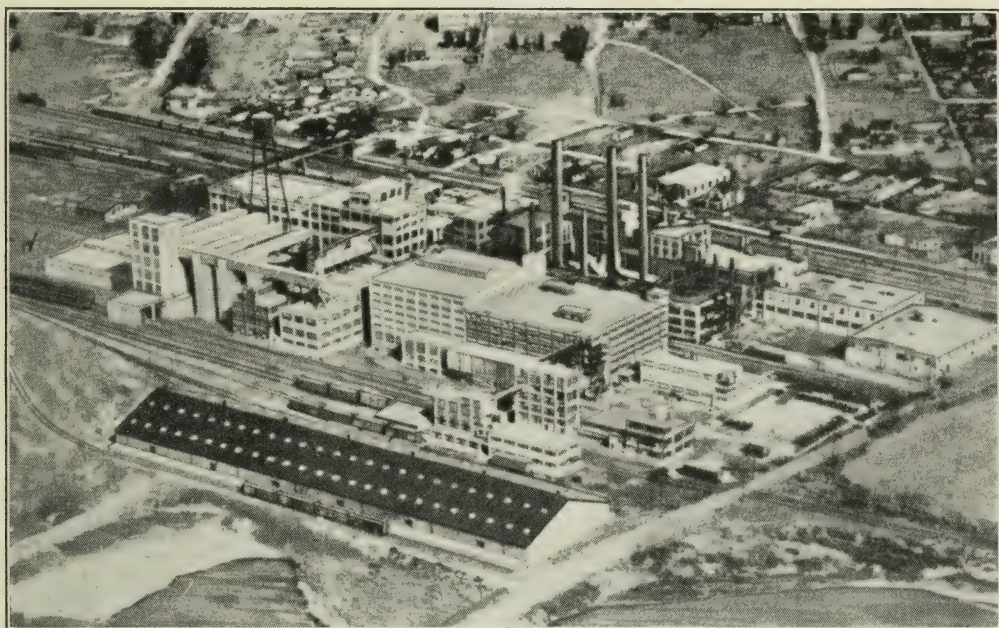
The period from 1840 to 1860, in general, was a period of industrial growth. There was temporary stagnation after the panic of 1837, but soon industry again took the place of speculative idling. After 1842, there was a steady growth which was checked only temporarily by the panic of 1857. Illinois by 1860 was manufacturing carriages and wagons, furniture, stoves, leather goods, agricultural implements, barrels, and whiskey. No longer would J. M. Peck have been justified in remarking on the future of Illinois that "little could be expected in machinery and manufactures." Industrially much had been accomplished in twenty years.

MODERN INDUSTRY EVOLVED

The period from 1860 to 1870 was the beginning of a new manufacturing era. It is said that "modern industry in Illinois is built upon the foundations laid in the tumultuous era of civil strife." The Civil war had an immediate effect in bolstering manufacturing interests. It created enormous demands for foodstuffs, clothing, machinery and other commodities. The resultant advance in prices and the heavy war tariffs placed on imported products, stimulated expansion and the development of new enterprises. Railroads were extended, people flocked to the cities, higher wages prevailed and living standards went up. The period of high prices continued for some time after the war, yet even when the bottom dropped out and industry was forced to go through an era of depression and readjustment, Illinois held her own. When the Federal industrial census of 1870 was taken, she showed marked progress.

Even greater advancement followed in the next twenty years. New power methods were devised, more efficient machines were developed to replace hand labor, transportation and marketing facilities were improved, and the volume of capital investment was multiplied many times. The \$94,000,000 invested in Illinois industries in 1870 had increased to more than \$500,000,000 in 1890.

A general tendency toward large-scale production has characterized the final evolution in manufacturing. This concentration of larger units into fewer establishments has made possible the installation of more expensive machinery and improved processes. It has resulted in economies from more efficient management, specialization and the utilization of by-products. It has given definite advantages in securing raw materials and marketing the finished products. Large investments of capital made essential by this trend have been accomplished through corporate forms of organization for industrial companies. Industrial legislation, responsive to the prestige organized labor has achieved, likewise has been a potent factor.



CORN PRODUCTS, PEKIN

THE VALLEY'S PLACE IN INDUSTRY

From the time of the Civil war, Chicago rapidly achieved her position as the industrial metropolis of Illinois. It is significant to note that virtually two-thirds of the manufacturing in the state were centered at Chicago in 1929, when the last Federal survey was made. Removed from this overpowering comparison, however, many other cities of the state would be considered decidedly industrial in their makeup, including those of the upper valley region. The valley, as a whole, remains today essentially agricultural, yet its manufacturing interests contribute a very material share to the industrial structure of the state.

An inspection of the valley's present status presents a number of interesting conclusions. In pioneer days, each community was a manufacturing entity in itself, its shops serving primarily the needs at home. For example, Pike County, at an early day, had twenty-four mills, fifteen pork-packing plants, three woolen mills, six tobacco factories and a number of foundries. Today this is essentially a rural county, and virtually all the manufactured goods it uses is shipped from outside. In the industrial evolution which has taken place since frontier times, manufacturing almost entirely has been drawn to the larger centers of the valley. Factories still found in smaller towns, such as the potteries of Morton, the woolen mills of Lacon, and the wheel works of Havana, are exceptions to the prevailing rule. Moreover, only a cursory examination of the valley's factory distribution is needed to reveal the rather sharp line that exists industrially between the upper and lower portions dividing at Pekin. All the larger cities of the region are located north of this point and the majority of them owe their economic welfare to their industrial activities. In the lower valley, Jacksonville is the largest city and its volume of manufacturing is secondary to the educational and institutional welfare activity that predominates there. This division was best illustrated by the Federal survey of 1929. Returns were given for Cass, Greene, Mason, Morgan, Pike and Schuyler counties of the lower section, and Grundy, La Salle, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, Will, and Woodford of the northern end. Reports were not available for the other counties of the valley. A total of 101 factories, employing 2,231 wage earners, were attributed to the six lower counties, while the upper seven were accredited with 603 factories with payrolls aggregating 38,736 persons.

The presence of a manufacturing concern in a specific location can usually be traced to one or more of four main factors: (1) Transportation, (2) closeness to raw materials, (3) closeness to a market, and (4) some form of local or individual enterprise. These matters vary in importance in accordance with the nature of the product, and are often closely allied to such additional elements as labor conditions and fuel supply. It

is interesting to note the bearing they have had on the valley's industrial progress.

Transportation has always been an important factor in this region. Steamboat navigation in the early days gave the smaller towns on the river industries which the railroad later took away from them and moved to the cities. The railroad, on the other hand, has contributed materially to the present position of such centers as Peoria, by creating important freight connections in addition to the natural facilities already provided by the river. It may be noted that simultaneous with Peoria's industrial growth, the number of railroads serving her increased from three in 1860 to ten in 1875.

The close relationship existing between industry and agriculture in the Illinois Valley offers an unequalled illustration of the dependence of manufacturing upon a convenient source of raw materials and a ready market for finished products. An unusual interlocking of these two all-important factors is found here. A large portion of the factories of this region are devoted either to making equipment needed in the pursuit of agriculture or utilizing products from the farm in the manufacture of other commodities. The Peoria-Pekin industrial district is the best example of this situation. These cities have long been noted for their production of farm machinery. Peoria has the largest production of tractors in the world. The same factory turns out harvesting and threshing combines which cut grain and turn it out ready for market in one operation, typifying the strides industry has taken since pioneer days in simplifying the work of the farm. Wire fencing, to make the farmer's fields "hog-tight," is still another aspect of Peoria's output. To this also may be attributed at least a portion of the activities of Joliet's steel mills; and so, too, is it responsible for a share of La Salle's zinc smelting, inasmuch as the galvanizing of wire is one of the chief outlets for the latter industry.

But supplying the farmer with his tools is only one side of the picture. The farmer, in turn, finds an important market for his corn in a number of large factories of the Peoria-Pekin district. Originally, he poured his surplus grain into the distilleries. Since prohibition other uses have created demands greater than even in the palmiest days of the whiskey traffic. The great corn products and yeast plants of Pekin and the milling concerns of Peoria convert the grain into food products both for man and livestock; and vast commercial distilleries which have taken the place of the old whiskey plants utilize the off-grade surplus for making commercial alcohol and solvents.

Native raw materials are responsible for much of the industrial activity of the cities of La Salle County. An advantageous coal supply and a close market brought about the zinc products plants of La Salle and Peru.

Deposits of rock and sand resulted in the cement works of the same vicinity. At Ottawa, extensive plants for the manufacture of plate glass are dependent upon unusually rich native supplies of silica sand, while at Streator one of the largest bottle factories in the West owes its existence to the same source.

Interspersed with these industries attributable directly to local conditions are those instituted as a result of initiative on the part of individuals or groups of citizens eager for commercial advancement. The watch and clock works at La Salle and Peru are an example of this form of enterprise. The woolen mills at Lacon is another.

(Communicated)

The following beautiful poem written by Will S. Hays was a favorite one of the late Captain Henry Detweiller, who has stood his last watch and rung his last bell as he took the great ferry to the other shore.

To a river man who is familiar with the steamboat phrases used in the poem it is a perfect treat—so natural, so truthful, that all who have trod the deck of a steamer, whose duty it was to give command, will at once recognize the language.

HIS LAST TRIP

“Mate, get ready down on deck;
I’m heading for the shore—
I’ll ring the bell, for I must land
This boat forevermore.

“Say, pilot, can you see that light?
I do—where angels stand!
Well, hold her jackstaff hard on that,
For there I’m going to land.

“That looks like Death a-hailing me,
So ghastly, grim and pale;
I’ll toll the bell!—I must go in—
I never passed a hail.

“Stop her! Let her come in slow.
There! That will do—no more!
The lines are fast and angels wait
To welcome me ashore.

“Say, pilot, I am going with them
Over yonder through that gate.
I’ll not come back; you ring the bell
And back her out—don’t wait.

“For I have made the trip of life
And found my landing place;
I’ll take my soul and anchor that
Fast to the Throne of Grace.”

—Will S. Hays.

THE OLD HOME

ALWAYS has an irresistible appeal—whether the old home town, city, county or state—whether one's very own, or that of one's parents or grandparents.

In this history appear many honored names of pioneers and others, who, before becoming an important part of this section and this history, were prominent in the OLD HOME, *elsewhere*.

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